

## I Just Need Time (But I'm All Out)

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/27736888) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/27736888>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Category:	<a href="#">M/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Video Blogging RPF</a> , <a href="#">Minecraft (Video Game)</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Clay   Dream/GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)</a>
Character:	<a href="#">GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Clay   Dream (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Sapnap (Video Blogging RPF)</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Fluff and Angst</a> , <a href="#">Angst with a Happy Ending</a> , <a href="#">Face Reveal</a> , <a href="#">Hurt/Comfort</a> , <a href="#">Cute</a> , <a href="#">Making Up</a> , <a href="#">Mutual Pining</a> , <a href="#">Pining</a> , <a href="#">Confessions</a> , <a href="#">I know it sounds angsty but I promise guys</a> , <a href="#">Happy Ending</a> , <a href="#">Declarations Of Love</a> , <a href="#">Friends to Lovers</a> , <a href="#">Please don't post this anywhere else</a> , <a href="#">cursing</a> , <a href="#">Sapnap being a bro</a> , <a href="#">Dream being dumb</a> , <a href="#">George being dumb</a> , <a href="#">Idiots in Love</a> , <a href="#">Getting Together</a> , <a href="#">Fluff</a> , <a href="#">Some texting</a> , <a href="#">Panic Attacks</a>
Language:	English
Collections:	<a href="#">call 911 for I have died at the sheer perfection that are these fics</a>
Stats:	Published: 2020-11-27 Completed: 2021-02-14 Chapters: 9/9 Words: 53584

## I Just Need Time (But I'm All Out)

by [Endlessly\\_Searching](#)

### Summary

They had fought before. It's not like they hadn't ever argued. When you knew someone for so long and spent so much of your time talking to them it was natural to have the occasional argument. George had known Dream for years so it was bound to happen a few times, but it had never been like this...

Fuck it he thought.

What else could he lose?

A dry laugh left his lips. "It's not going to make me love you any less Clay." His breath shuddered and tears fell faster now but he pushed on. "It's not. You fucking asshole."

Or,

George and Dream have an argument and they both say things they regret. It ends in George saying too much by confessing his feelings and hanging up. Dream frantically tries to make it up to him and let him know he returns the feelings, but George won't answer so he decides to take a risk. Featuring a true bro and wise man Sapnap. It's a little angsty at first but it's going to get real cute guys. Dream is a sweetheart.

# Even if We Both Breakdown Tonight

## Chapter Notes

Hey just a disclaimer. If either Dream or George say they're uncomfortable with fanfic I will not hesitate to take this down. This is not meant to harm anyone and in no way should any work of fiction be taken seriously or applied to real life. I just want to explore their dynamic, but the characters in this story are fictional and I do not legitimately ship the two real life counter parts.

Anyway, the title of the fic and the tone of it were mildly inspired by the song Time by NF. I listened to it on repeat while writing this and I HIGHLY recommend listening to it while reading. A lot of the lyrics hit hard bro and ring true to the stuff happening in the fic. Also, PLEASE leave comments. I love to chat!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

They had fought before. It's not like they hadn't ever argued. When you knew someone for so long and spent so much of your time talking to them it was natural to have the occasional argument. George had known Dream for years so it was bound to happen a few times, but it had never been like this. There were times where they'd gotten on each other's nerves, times they needed to end a stream a little early, moments where they had to pull away and take a few hours of space. This time was different though. George knew it was different.

It was funny because of all the times he had expected a fight this intense between the two it would've been earlier in their friendship. Not now, when they had been closer than ever before. In the last couple of months they had drawn closer, their friendship grew stronger. They spent an absurd amount of time on call with each other. Slipping in time to talk between every small crack in their sporadic schedules. When they weren't calling they were texting. God, Dream sent him at least five memes every day. Sometimes it was just stuff about their day, sometimes a joke, a funny video, a cute cat picture. They were always communicating in some form now, and George had never felt happier.

They had grown so much closer, and he never knew if he should be grateful for it because he felt so lucky to have Dream as a friend or hate it because it only caused his absurd romantic feelings to grow. Even Sapnap had noticed the change between the two. When he had asked George what had shifted in his relationship with Dream he couldn't quite tell him. It just felt right, natural.

He supposed that it had started when he had asked Dream to stay on call with him one night. It had been a spontaneous request and slipped through his tired lips without resistance. Before George could even consider what he had just said, Dream had agreed.

They had spent hours on that call. It had no purpose like their normal calls, no set plan, end. They stayed on not because they had to, but just because. George could remember vividly as the hours dragged on and the pauses between their conversations grew longer, their voices quieter, and then eventually his consciousness faded and he found himself unable to respond to Dream.

When he woke up in the morning realizing he had fallen asleep on the call he flushed and settled on sending a simple thanks instead of an apology. Dream had just responded with a smile, and George had relaxed on spot. It was casual, easy. He had smiled down at his phone fondly as his

body practically exploded with warmth from something so simple.

After that night it seemed like the metaphorical walls between the two of them had vanished. Dream started to text him randomly a lot more, and George found himself looking forward to seeing the little notification pop up on his phone. It didn't feel weird to ask Dream to call just so they could talk. It became such a routine that he didn't even have to ask if Dream wanted to call anymore, he just asked when.

The most surprising of all though was that Dream opened up to him a lot more. Sometimes when Dream called later at night his tone shifted. His voice would lower and he would tell George about his worries, his fears, anything that came to mind in the somber and quiet hours of the night and early morning. In return, George had shared a lot more too. The filters he had put in place when talking to others simply vanished with Dream. Dream had been his friend before, but now he was someone George could be vulnerable with, someone who could provide support, his best friend. George trusted him.

So *why*?

He couldn't remember exactly how it started. It had been a long day for both of them. George was exhausted from running errands earlier in the day, but he still sat down in order to stream with Sapnap and Dream. It had dragged on for hours and George really did love his friends and streaming but tonight? He was counting the seconds until it ended. As per usual once the stream had ended he and Dream had decided to stay on call for a bit. George could tell Dream was in a bit of a mood, but it was fine because usually, the calls tended to cheer him up again.

It had started with some dumb comment George had made about not having seen Dream's face yet. Dream had gotten weirdly defensive and closed off about it as per usual, but something about it this time was different. Maybe it was because of the tone of his voice, George's exhaustion, or because they were so much closer now, but George wasn't having it this time. He felt something just below the surface simmer with steady annoyance, beginning to boil into anger. He just couldn't keep the snappiness out of his voice when he responded.

"I just think it's a little weird I haven't seen it."

Once he had said that they had a bit of a back and forth about it. George knew he was being unusually persistent about the topic. He wasn't asking to see but he wanted to know why he hadn't seen Dream before. Why had Sapnap seen Dream so many times before and so easily and George hadn't? Why had Dream backed out of their deal that one stream when George clearly wasn't going to scam him? He just wanted to know and he was tired of never getting an answer. So he kept pushing, and Dream only got more and more defensive which only made George angrier.

"Dude why are you so hung up about looks?"

And from that one comment from Dream, George felt the anger that had once simmered beneath the surface bubble over. He stared at his monitor with gritted teeth, his mouse gripped unfairly tight in his hand.

"Are you *fucking* kidding me right now Dream?" George snarled, unable to hold back the angry disbelief from his voice.

There was a brief pause on the other end of the call, then the sound of sheets rustling before Dream seemed to take in the whole conversation.

"Am I *kidding*? Am I kidding George? Seriously, you're always the one pressuring me about it!"

Their conversation had been building up to something ugly, but George couldn't help but pour it out. He knew he was just unleashing all the feelings he had bottled up about the matter. He knew it had been bound to happen between them. The air was charged with something thick and electric.

He leaned forward in his seat, glaring at Dream's dumb contact as if it was the man himself. "Pressuring? Dream I literally don't pressure you over it. I've waited for you to fucking show me for years!"

"Then what the fuck is this?"

George scoffed. "I'm not fucking asking to see your face right now Dream."

"Then what the hell has this entire conversation been George?! You've just spent thirty minutes pushing me on the fact that I don't show my face!"

George felt his jaw clench hard enough to break his teeth. "Because I'm not asking to see your face but I think I *at least* deserve to know why you won't fucking show me."

There he had said it. He hated how Dream would sometimes twist his intentions when it came to a face reveal. He just wanted an explanation on why he was so excluded. Was George doing something wrong? Was Dream freaking out about something they could fix? Why did he have to make George feel so guilty for wanting to know?

He could hear some shuffling on the line before Dream responded. "You don't *even deserve* to know why I won't"

George inhaled sharply, mouth dropped in shock. He sat for a second. His were thoughts frozen as Dream's words replayed in his head over and over like a broken record. Then like a switch had been flicked all the anger doubled and adrenaline surged through his veins. George shot out of his chair unable to sit still anymore.

"Don't deserve it?!" George felt cold laughter bubble out of his mouth. "The fucking *audacity* Dream. How long have I been your fucking friend?!" His voice was raised now, not quite shouting but nothing close to a casual volume at all.

"Fucking hell George being my friend doesn't give you the right to know! Doesn't give you the right to see. How selfish can--"

"Stop right fucking there! You complete fucking asshole! Selfish? Am I being selfish?! Don't you dare fucking call me selfish Dream."

Dream laughed cruelly from the other side of the line. "Well it's fucking true isn't it. You're a selfish bastard only thinking about what you want. What you want to see, what you want to know. You're not thinking about how I fucking feel about this George! So yes you're fucking selfish!"

George was trembling in pure anger at this point. He was far off the edge and everything was fueling his thoughts. A small part of him was screaming at him to just hang up, to stop here but the rest of him drowned it out. Dream was just spewing bullshit at this point.

He was thinking about how Dream felt about this. He was! It just could've been nice if Dream would also think about how he felt about it. He was always shutting George out on anything even related to his feelings about showing his face. He was flat out mean about it sometimes.

Making fun of George for his questions or even shutting him out completely. The amount of times Dream had ghosted him when George even asked about why Dream wouldn't show him his face

was insane. George had backed off, given him space, approached the question in many different ways. He had given Dream all the time he needed. George was all fine with it, he trod carefully. He hadn't pressed the issue for about a year. And It was all okay until he found out that Dream had shown Wilbur already.

*Wilbur.*

And that had just baffled George beyond expression. Wilbur was a great friend but he wasn't *nearly* as close to Dream as George was. He had admitted that for a second he was jealous, and then he was just hurt and confused.

So everything in his body absolutely protested at Dream's word.

"That's not fucking true and you know it! I've known you for literal years, Dream! We talk every goddamn day! I've been so fucking patient about you not showing your face but you give me nothing! You won't even tell me why! You'll entertain the idea of showing me and then you'll back out and joke off the whole fucking thing Dream! It makes me feel fucking dumb! And fine maybe sometimes I'm fucking selfish! How dare I want to see my best friend's face right? How fucking selfish of me! WELL MAYBE IF YOU'D AT LEAST FUCKING TELL ME WHY YOU WON'T! You just don't have to be such an asshole about it! You don't even have a good reason do you?!"

There was a thud from the other side of the call. "Why the fuck does it even matter George?"

"Why? DRE--"

"IT DOESN'T!" Dream cut him off. "IT FUCKING DOESN'T!" George could hear him suck in a harsh breath. "You don't need to see my face to be my fucking friend George! The reason why doesn't need to be good if it literally doesn't fucking matter!"

"IT MATTERS TO ME OKAY?!" George took a deep breath, feeling a little light head. "I don't care what you look like! You don't want to show me your face fine! But why won't you ever talk to me about it? You don't have to make me feel so fucking dumb about wanting to put a face to my best friend! I just want to know why you're so fucking defensive about even the idea of *me* seeing your face!"

"If you need to see my face just because you're my friend then maybe you're not a *real* fucking friend!"

George panted, voice cracked raw from shouting. "What?" He croaked out.

"Maybe YOU'RE not my fucking friend George! Why the fuck should I be friends with someone so fucking selfish! Why would I show my face to someone *like you!* "

His heart was pounding in his ears at this point and he could feel himself begin to shake. That had hurt. He knew deep down Dream couldn't have meant it, but hearing him say it with such venom and conviction had hurt. It made it real.

George fumbled with words in his head, everything was going way too fast. His feelings and thoughts were a rapid-fire in his brain. He was shaking at this point.

"You piece of shit!!" He wheezed struggling to slow his breathing. He had to push through though, had to get his thoughts out before they consumed him, so he continued. "You're just saying shit because you're fucking scared!"

There was a laugh on the other end of the call. It was a sick twist of Dream's usual laugh and hearing it ring out in his own empty apartment made something ugly twist in his stomach.

When Dream stopped laughing he didn't hesitate in speaking,

"I'm not *scared* George, it's the fucking truth."

The flame in George only burned brighter at those words. There was no way Dream was saying George wasn't his friend. That had definitely crossed a line.

George collapsed back into his chair, weighed down in disbelief and anger, he leaned in close to the screen as if that would carry his words better over the call. If Dream wanted to say that was the truth then George was going to give him what really was.

"You are scared! You're just a scared fucking boy Dream!" Each word was like venom dripping from his lips but he didn't stop for a second. "I see right through you." He was speaking faster now trying to get every word in before Dream could. "You're just *so* fucking insecure!"

He knew he had crossed the line. Digging into Dream's deepest thoughts and feelings and laying it all out on the table. But he didn't feel an ounce of regret at the moment, because Dream had no right to say he wasn't his friend. Not after everything they had done together, everything they had shared together.

He knew he had pushed Dream over the edge when the other responded. His voice exploded from George's speakers. "YOU DON'T KNOW SHIT GEORGE! Stop acting like you know fucking anything about me! You don't know me George! You're jus--"

His heart rate skyrocketed at the shouting and before he knew it he was shooting up in his seat once again. Fists balled up and pressed on his table he shouted back. "I DO! I fucking do. You're saying this shit to deflect. It's just your shitty defense! Because you're insecure! You're going to wake up tomorrow and regret this Dream! I know you! I've known you for years!"

"Shut the *fuck* up George!" He could hear Dream scoff over the phone. He spoke quieter this time seeming to catch his breath from the shouting. "You're just so fucking *dumb*."

It was a phrase he had heard so many times. Often fond, filled with laughter, but now Dream's voice was empty. The phrase was sharper than a knife as it pierced right through George's heart. He had never had Dream speak in that tone with him. He could feel his anger start to calm and instead tears began to form. This argument hurt. He knew he had pushed too far, way past the point of return. They had both said things to hurt each other, and he had started it. There was no taking this back. He couldn't help but *feel* dumb. He had gone about this wrong. He just wanted Dream to tell him for once and not shut him out. And if he was right about Dream somehow being insecure, he needed Dream to know that it was all irrational. George would never judge Dream for his face.

"I'm not." He lied through gritted teeth. "I'm not fucking dumb." He leaned his forearms against his table to brace himself, facing his floor and futilely trying to blink back tears. "You think showing your face is going to change things, because you're insecure as shit. You have so many fans who praise you but it means nothing, because nothing fucking reaches you."

"Shut up."

He didn't, he just pushed on.

"You're fucking *empty* Dream. You have everything and so, *so* many people looking up to you and yet it means nothing. Cause you still hate yourself!"

“Shut up!”

“I’m *sorry* Dream, I went about this wrong. But *please* listen to me.” He swallowed thickly hoping to soothe his abused throat. “It’s all in your fucking head Dream! Wake up! Look at all the people around you! Look at all the people who praise you.” His voice was firm even as he pushed his words past a clenched jaw. “Your best friend seeing your face isn’t going to change shit Dream! What is it going to change between us? Why would my fucking opinion on you changing even matter? I’m just one person Dream. How can you text me everyday, call me everyday, and think that I wo-“

“SHUT UP GEORGE!”

The shout sliced through his words and echoed through the room, bouncing off the walls like it did George’s ears. He couldn’t help but snap his head up to look at his screen in shock. Silence buzzed in the air just like the absence of sound after thunder. There was no sound other than quiet breathing from Dream’s side of the call. It had felt like a shock to his heart, halting it in its tracks.

George swallowed around the lump in his throat and pushed on when he realized Dream had planned to stay silent.

“I’m right Dream.” He pleaded, desperate at this point. “You know I’m fucking right. Your mind just fucks with yo-“

“YOU’RE *WRONG* GEORGE!” His mouth clamped shut at the gravity of the words. “IT’S GOING TO CHANGE EVERYTHING! YOU DON’T GET IT!” He could hear Dream take a ragged breath. “I’m not going to just willingly change how people see me! I already have enough pressure! You think I want this? Do you?!” He heard a short stiff laugh. “YOU DON’T KNOW *SHIT* !”

The anger was starting to leave him at this point. He just wanted it all to stop, he needed it to stop. He wasn’t getting anywhere with this.

He was tired.

“Oh my fucking god,” George muttered rolling his eyes. There wasn’t a part of him not shaking at this point. The adrenaline leaking from his body was taking all his energy with it. He pushed forward though, stubborn as always. He wasn’t going to let Dream think he won this, even if neither of them was actually going to win at this point. They had both lost the minute they crossed a line.

He tried to channel all that was left of himself in his voice. “It’s not going to-” He cut himself off, he was getting choked up. The tears were way too close to falling and he couldn’t blink them back anymore.

He didn’t want to do this, he just felt like he was digging the grave of their friendship. But he couldn’t stop, he was so mad, so frustrated with the whole thing, he couldn’t just let it go. He wanted to lay it all out, air everything out, it was so tempting. But he knew that once he did things would never be the same, so he just dug his hands into his thighs and bit his lip.

“It’s not going to *what* George?” Dream spat cruelly.

George couldn’t even recognize his friend’s voice at this point. It didn’t sound like the same person who called him every night. The same person who cheered him up. The same person who joked and flirted. It didn’t sound like his best friend’s voice. It didn’t sound like the person he loved more

than a friend. The person he trusted.

George's breath hitched and he felt a minute of panic pass. He couldn't breathe, he knew he was probably breathing heavily but he felt like he couldn't catch his breath. Everything felt distant, and the tears blurring in his eyes didn't help. The breath was stuck in his throat. Trapped by the growing lump and choked back tears. He was shaking so hard he had to sit again, the words were right on the tip of his tongue, ready to be spoken, spilled into the conversation with uncharacteristic malice.

"What George?" Dream persisted, his voice breaking through the muffled sound of everything else. George felt like he was drowning.

"Don't make me fucking say it." He shook his head feeling the traitorous tears begin to fall. He was trying to stay mad, he was *really* trying.

There were a few minutes of silence over the call as George refused to say anything else. He knew the minute he opened his mouth his resolve would crumble and he wouldn't be able to hold back the sobs clawing up his throat. The words he had bottled up for so long would explode from him, in a way he had never hoped they would be said.

"Say *what*?" Dream pushed again. There was a long pause between the two of them. The air was heavy, suffocating. Everything George inhaled felt like poison in his spasming lungs. There was a huff on the other side of the call before Dream spoke again. "That's what I thought." He said, voice so flat and yet so triumphant.

George was going to be sick.

He was feeling antsy, it was overwhelming. So many emotions churning inside him similar to a roaring fire, adrenaline was its gasoline, fueling it until he was practically exploding. Unable to sit in his chair he stood up straight, body yearning for escape but brain still painfully trapped in the present. He really was hyperventilating now. He just wanted this to be over.

*Fuck it he thought.*

*What else could he lose?*

A dry laugh left his lips. "It's not going to make me *love* you any less Clay." His breath shuddered and tears fell faster now but he pushed on, the haltingly honest words spilt from his with a tone he never wished to say them with, "It's not. You fucking asshole." He cut himself off with a sob and before he knew it he couldn't hold it in anymore. He covered his mouth pressing into it and willing the sobs to stop.

*He'd done it.*

Buried their friendship with his heart, said his one secret in such away that it had been catastrophically detrimental. His attempt to muffle his sobs was useless as they clawed up his throat and escaped past his hand anyway. Soon the only sound filling the air was his choked off sobs, radio silence from the other side of the call. At the sound of them, he couldn't help the wave of humiliation that washed over him.

He was so angry and yet here he was sobbing pathetically and he knew that there's no way that Clay couldn't hear it. He dug their grave and now he was going to lay in it. He shouldn't have felt pushed to say this, Clay shouldn't have pushed him, and he hated that he had.

"You fucking happy now *Clay*?" He spat between hiccuping sobs no longer feeling the urge to



restrain himself. "I love you and your fucking face won't change that." God, he sounded pathetic, his voice was breaking.

He had finally said it. Confessed his feelings. Those damned three words, he had said them with poison permeating the phrase, with an odd sense of vindication and shame. Never how he had intended them to be.

There was deathly silence from the line for way too long before Clay broke it. His voice was barely above a whisper.

"What do you mean?"

George couldn't help the laugh ripping through the sound of his crying. "What do you fucking think?"

The words weighed heavy in the air as he spoke them. There was a suffocating tension in the room, but he knew Clay had heard what he said. He knew that Clay got what he meant. There was no denying it now, he couldn't take back his confession. He had confirmed it.

He ran his fingers through his hair, grabbing fistfuls and tugging. He probably looked like a fucking mess.

"Geor-"

He could hear it in the other's voice. Such a minuscule detail but George knew Clay well. He could hear a slight quiver, a complete break in the other's resolve. He didn't care though, George was *humiliated*. Clay might've been broken but George's heart had shattered. The last thing he wanted was pity for his dumb ass unrequited feelings.

"Save it Clay." He interrupted, "I don't want to hear it." He quickly reached out his shaking hand to his mouse.

Without hesitation, he ended the call, hearing the familiar chime of him disconnecting, confirming their connection was gone. And before Clay could even think of trying to call again he shut off his computer.

The room was completely dark now. The light that had once bathed it had disappeared along with Clay's contact. It was jarring and his brain was scrambling to catch up with the difference, because there in the dark the weight of the conversation they just had set in on him. He was alone with his thoughts now. Worn out and shaking.

What a *wonderful* confession. He just couldn't shut his big mouth, could he? Well, he was pretty sure he just ended that friendship.

Well, it felt like the end. From the moment he hung up it felt like he had ripped Clay out of his life, and now there was just an empty spot where he was supposed to be.

His heart which had been beginning to mellow out from his anger started to beat faster again. He let himself slip from his chair, falling to the floor on his knees. The weight of their words still hung in the air, they were crushing him. Like a sick game, his mind began to replay everything that had been said. Thoughts racing once again. They were flooding his brain, he felt absolutely waterlogged by them.

He hated what he had said, hated what Clay had said.

*Why had he done that?*

His breathing quickened with his heart rate, and he could only desperately clutch his shirt over his chest. It was all too much and with no reason to hold back, he began to sob out pathetically. Each one tearing from his throat like the agony pouring from his heart. He only clutched his shirt tighter, willing the aching in his chest to stop. It felt like his heart had broken right then and there. No matter how tightly he clawed at his chest the pieces still remained scattered.

Regret crashed on him in waves as he cried. He was so angry, with himself, with Clay, but he still felt regret. He sat merely helpless as the many emotions he felt consumed him, rose over his head and submerged him.

“Shit.” He sobbed out, feeling himself spiral.

Sure he was right about some of it. Clay was being an asshole. He was defensive and insecure. George deserved to at least know the reason why he couldn’t put a face to his fucking best friend. Why Clay *specifically* was weird about George seeing. They’d known each other for years and when even the slightest mention of Clay’s face was brought up he could get downright cruel in shutting George out.

He couldn’t stop shaking as he thought about it. Ending a call with Clay like that left a nasty taste in his mouth, something sick and bitter that had his stomach turning. They always ended their calls the same way, a little habit they had formed when growing closer, and now it had been broken. Leaving a question and an answer left unsaid. He had never felt so alone, so lost, but he had never been so glad they were far apart.

George had pushed too far on their friendship and it had snapped. He didn’t have to cross that line. He had torn into Clay’s insecurities and facade savagely and without tact. When they were both worn out. When Clay had only just begun to share his secrets and who he really was. Maybe George was selfish, but he was so fucking tired. He wanted and wanted but he lost it. Now here he was wrecked on his floor, torn apart and longing. Hoping he could turn back time.

Because he just had to do all that and then cry pathetically before confessing to his best friend.

***How fucking awful.***

## Chapter End Notes

So that was kind of an oof huh? But don't worry that's the extent of the arguing in this fic. Next chapter is going to be focused on Dream planning to fix things and will be his POV. If you liked this PLEASE leave a kudos and a COMMENT. I'm desperate to talk to people man quarantine be crazy. Also comments encourage me to continue faster lol because I love hearing what people think.

Also this was a bitch to edit!! It was never supposed to be this long but oh well. The fic isn't going to be super long, maybe a twoshot? I have no clue man. It just felt weird to have all of it be one chapter? I have no clue what I'm doing but anyway I'm already working on the next chapter so don't stress. UNLESS IT'S LONGER THAN THIS BECAUSE FUCK I DON'T WANT TO EDIT ALL THAT.



# I Promise I'm Changing

## Chapter Notes

Hiiii I'm back!!! ALSO HOLY SHIT!!!! Everyone has been so fucking sweet!!! The comments SWEPT me off my feet you guys. You guys are the best I've swooned. I'm so glad I decided to post this lol.

Anyway, I've decided I'm going to try and update this once a day until all five chapters are up (Hopefully)

I said writing fanfic? Speedrun bitch

Lets gooooooooooooo!!!!

Also again the name of the fic and the chapter names are all from the song Time by NF. Enjoy <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Clay had *fucked* up.

He knew he fucked up almost immediately. The minute the discord call had ended when George hung up, Clay had shot up out of bed. He felt adrenaline rush through him in an instant, as the intense feeling of urgency consumed him. It was like little alarms were screaming and echoing around in his head. All he could think was to *move* .

*“It’s not going to make me love you any less Clay.”*

His mind was hung up on the words George had said. He hadn’t even had time to have their meaning sink into his head before George had cut the line connecting them. The call ending had felt like a bucket of ice-cold water thrown on him, jolting him into action.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck.” He muttered like a broken record, fumbling with the phone in his hand.

He clicked on George’s contact, it was muscle memory at this point that took over as he panicked. It took him less than a few seconds to pull up despite his mind scattering all over the place. His lip was sandwiched between his teeth as he bit down on it, anxiety causing him to act out on the bad habit.

“SHIT!” He shouted despite his voice being raw.

George’s contact showed that he was no longer online, and from how distraught George had sounded before the call had ended, he didn’t think there was a chance the other would be online anytime soon.

Despite this, he pressed the call button dead set on reaching George. The ringing echoed around his otherwise quiet room as he stared down at his phone.

“Please, please, pick up George.” He pleaded to no one as if it would cause George to pick up the phone.

He didn't even know what he was going to do, how he could help. All he knew was that right now it felt like the line connecting them had snapped, and he just knew he had to do *something*.

Eventually, the ringing stopped and the room was quiet again. Clay only sucked in a harsh breath and clicked the call button again with trembling fingers.

George had been *crying*. Fucking crying. The instant Clay heard a muffled sob over the call his world had shattered. All the fight had left him without a second thought and all he could feel was crushing guilt and regret. He had made George cry.

It felt like a part of him was being ripped out with every sob and shuddering breath he heard. At first, he had gone completely rigid at the sound, his brain was reeling and trying to figure out if what he heard was in fact crying. Then another choked off sob confirmed his fears and his stomach plummeted. He was helpless listening to the sobs over the line, being unable to be there and reach out. He had never wanted to reach through a phone so fucking bad. Why did they have to have oceans between them?

The call fell flat again and Clay wanted to scream. He was pacing around his room at this point, on the verge of tears himself out of pure frustration.

Why had he said all that? Why was he such a fucking *asshole* ? Why had he pushed George?

And then it hit him all over again.

*"It's not going to make me love you any less Clay."*

George had fucking *confessed* to him. He had finally said he loved him, but he didn't say it *platonically* . Clay had only hoped to hear those words fall from George's lips in his dreams. To have his feelings be returned by his best friend, and now he had heard them out loud, from George's very own mouth. But instead of bursting with joy, he was feeling worse than ever before. Because George was crying. They had fought and Clay had said things he wished with everything he had, that he could take back. And George was *crying* .

The confession only made Clay feel sick. It didn't even matter much to him at this point, because all that mattered was somewhere in Brighton George, his best friend, the man he fell in love with, was crying alone in his apartment not answering his phone. All because of Clay's absolute stupidity.

He had done the exact thing that he had tried to avoid.

After the fourth time of trying to call him, Clay gave up. He stilled in his pacing and instead sat down on his bed. He opened their messages, and his fingers practically flew across the small keyboard as he frantically tried to type.

**Georgie :D <3 & Dream:**

**Dream:** Please George pick up the phone

**Dream:** George?

**Dream:** Talk to me

**Dream:** Please

**Dream:** I'm so fucking sorry

**Dream:** Please answer the phone please

**Dream:** I need you to hear me out

**Dream:** I'm sorry

**Dream:** Please let me talk to you

**Dream:** God please pick up the phone

**Dream:** I'm so fucking sorry George please I was fucking dumb I don't sorry I hurt you I was being so fucking dumb please let me talk to you I didn't mean any of it I didn't want to make you cry

**Dream:** Let me help please

**Dream:** I need to talk to you about this

**Dream:** George please pick up the phone

**Dream:** At least call someone else for support please you can hate me I don't care but please I need you to be okay

**Dream:** I care about you so fucking much please George

**Dream:** Call Nick or Dad please someone

**Dream:** Please call me when you can

**Dream:** I'm so sorry George

Clay stared down at his phone for what felt like hours but was probably only thirty minutes. He had sent the messages periodically as he waited with bated breath for a response. The longer time dragged on the less hopeful he was to get one. George hadn't responded or been online since the call. Clay let out a sigh of pure frustration.

**Sapnappy&Dream:**

**Dream:** Can you check on George?

**Sapnappy:** Why, what's up?

**Dream:** just please

**Sapnappy:** okay

**Sapnappy:** I sent smth he's not responding.

**Dream:** fuck try calling?

**Sapnappy:** dude u know it's late 4 him right?

**Dream:** I know we had a fight

**Sapnappy:** wait what?

**Sapnappy:** Dream

**Sapnappy:** what did you fight about?

**Sapnappy:** he's not responding

**Sapnappy:** DREAM

**Dream:** fuck dude i fucked up so bad idk what to do

**Sapnappy:** shit okay okay

**Sapnappy:** u seem pretty hung up rn so mayb calm down first okay? Deep breaths remember the thing i showed u

**Dream:** Okay. I can't calm down though. I can't stop thinking about what I said. Nick he cried

**Dream:** He was fucking crying. I made him fucking cry

**Sapnappy:** Oh fuck.

**Sapnappy:** Okay I need u to take a breath. I have class but srsly the second i get home I'm calling you.

**Sapnappy:** just calm down, take a while to breathe maybe watch smth comforting or distract yourself. Don't get in your own head abt this just give me three hours.

**Dream:** please let me know if george responds.

**Sapnappy:** I will but if it's as bad as it sounds give him some space. You both should calm down. Dw abt him I'll take care of it.

**Sapnappy:** Do what i told u okay? I will call u as soon as im home.

**Dream:** Ok.

Clay had to physically force himself from constantly checking his phone as the hours passed. He did keep the sound on though and every time a notification broke the silence he would check it immediately in case it was George. He spent a good amount of the time pacing his room trying to do a breathing exercise that Nick had taught him. When his emotions would bubble up he was quick to shove them down. Everything was just too much to handle right now.

He couldn't stop hearing George crying. Couldn't stop replaying the words they had both said in his head over and over. It was overwhelming and only building on his anxiety so he shoved everything deep down to examine later with Nick.

By the time Nick had called him Clay was laying on his bed staring up at his ceiling as music blasted through his headphones. It was loud enough to drown out his thoughts but quiet enough to hear the ringing of a call. Before the phone could ring twice he was already snatching it up from his bedside table, heart in his throat.

*What if it was George.*

His heart plummeted when he realized it was just Nick's contact lighting up the screen, but he

didn't hesitate in answering.

"Hello?" He asked voice a bit unsteady.

"Oh shit Dream." Nick said. "Dude, you sound not good."

Dream barked out a halfhearted laugh. His voice probably sounded wrecked from the argument and the lump that had been stuck in it since.

"I'm so far from good right now man." He responded.

Clay could imagine the face Nick had made. "Dude tell me what happened."

Clay took a ragged breath, mind running through the events of the last few hours and trying to identify where to start. He struggled to sift through everything and find the words. He didn't know how long it had taken him to get his bearings but Nick was being patient.

Eventually, he found his words. "We fought." he stated plainly.

"Yeah I got that dude." Nick replied flatly. "Who started it? What was it even about. You guys haven't actually argued in years and never this bad."

Clay stared down at the carpet on his floor needing something to focus on as he tried to remember what had happened.

"George started it, I think. I don't know it was fucking stupid, we were both just annoyed. I just..." Clay trailed off searching for the right words. "He brought up the fact that I still haven't shown him my face."

There was silence on the other line and Clay took it as a sign to continue.

"I just got annoyed."

"Yeah that sounds right." Nick replied. "Keep going."

Clay took a steadying breath. "Fuck I know I get defensive about it. It was fucking dumb and then he got annoyed because I couldn't tell him why I wouldn't show him." He took a breath. "It just went from there and next thing I know we're *really* arguing man."

"How bad was it?" Nick asked.

"It got worse. I was a fucking asshole, but he kept pushing and I didn't know what to say so I just shut down. We were yelling. He wouldn't stop pushing. God, it felt like he was laying everything out. Telling me I was insecure and just ripping into everything. I got so mad, but he wouldn't stop." Clay paused feeling the lump in his throat grow larger. He found he couldn't swallow anymore the more he recalled what had happened. The words seemed stuck behind his teeth but he forced them through. "I told him that he was *dumb*, that he didn't know me. Fuck I told him he wasn't my friend. Wasn't a *real* friend."

"*Fuck*, Clay."

Clay's breath hitched. "I *know*."

"Is that why he cried?"

"No, it gets *worse*."



“*Clay*.” Nick said in disbelief. “What else did you say?”

Clay had his pant leg twisted in his grip at this point, as he held the phone up to his ear trying to speak, “God he must’ve been tearing up but I just couldn’t stop. We had both stopped yelling but I just wanted to get the last say in, and he kept fighting me on it. He was *right* Nick. Everything he said was *true* I just couldn’t-”

“I get it.” Nick interrupted sensing Clay was spiraling a bit. “I know dude. Take a breath okay? Then tell me what happened.”

So he did.

“I kept pushing him.” Clay’s eyes started to sting a little at this point. The grip he had on his pant leg was painful, and he was digging into his skin despite the fabric in the way. “and he” He paused again to take a calming breath. Reliving what had happened was just making him confront all his guilt.

“He said he *loves* me.” He forced out.

There was a strangled noise from the other end of the call. “*What?!*”

“He said he loves me, and I asked what he meant by it, and god, he said I would know. Like-”

“Romantically?” Nick interrupted, his voice full of disbelief.

“Yes.” Clay responded.

He released his grip on his pants and took a deep breath. He was processing all this in real-time with Nick. Thoughts were rushing through his head and it was getting hard to manage all of them. Suddenly, something occurred to him.

He spoke his thoughts out loud. “He said he loved me. God Nick, he said he loved *me*. He didn’t say he loved *Dream*, he said *Clay*.” Clay felt the urge to cry escalate after his realization. “He said that my face couldn’t change him loving me. He was crying during it, Nick. Crying.”

“Shit Clay did you say you-”

“He hung up before I could say anything. Fuck I’ve never regretted something so much in my life Nick.” Clay was getting choked up. “He was *crying*. I made him cry. I said all that. I didn’t mean any of it.” The lump in his throat stopped any more words coming from his mouth.

He blinked hoping to clear the tears from his eyes, but it only pushed them to fall down his cheeks. “I fucked up.” He stated voice cracking.

“Yeah. Well you both fucked up. Shit that’s-” Clay could hear a deep sigh. “I kind of figured something like this would happen. I mean both of you are stubborn. I could tell George was bottling up a lot. He just doesn’t always say when shit bothers him and it builds. And you’re just as stubborn and it’s so fucking hard to pry shit out of you.”

Nick was right, the way they both treated this was a recipe for disaster.

“I should’ve just answered him.” Clay said.

“Yeah you should’ve, but he also shouldn’t have pushed you so much on it.”

Clay worried his lip between his teeth again. Taking a mental backseat to the many thoughts

flooding his head.

For a while it was silent before he broke it, “I said so much shit.”

“You did.”

“I was trying to protect myself and our relationship, and I only ended up pushing him away. I didn’t want me showing my face to change what we had. I couldn’t let that happen. He’s too important to lose, and yet here I am. I did the complete *fucking opposite*. I’m a fucking fool.” Clay laid back on his bed, exhausted. “What do I do?”

It was silent for a bit and Clay presumed that Nick was just thinking about what to say. He stared up at his ceiling as he waited. He always hated that it was a popcorn ceiling, but at least he had some patterns to trace as a distraction.

Clay felt weirdly calm after speaking everything, it was cathartic in a way. Perhaps it was crying that helped release some of his pent up emotions and stress after what had happened. It had been hours after the argument but he had felt on edge the entire time. Now though, he felt a little more relaxed and way less emotional. Before he could think too much about the change Nick interrupted his thoughts.

“Okay, you should give him some space. I can’t imagine how he feels right now after confessing. I think you both need space, but Clay you need to apologize and you need to explain yourself.” Nick paused briefly as if considering his next words and then continued. “You need to be completely up front and honest for once dude. You’re one of my *best* friends and I love you, but you’re always running from shit. When it comes to people you shut them out.” He snorted. “It’s like you’re always wearing a mask, man. Honestly I think you should explain to him exactly how you feel, *and* show him your face.”

Clay sucked in a breath as Nick’s words settled on him.

He hummed before he spoke, “Yeah I know. I should’ve done that a long time ago.”

Nick made a noise of agreement before speaking, “You know for someone who takes so many crazy jumps and stunts in minecraft, it’s shocking how overly cautious you are with relationships. The more you care about someone the less risks you’ll take, but man it’s detrimental.”

Clay couldn’t help but laugh at that. It was way too true. The person he was when he was playing was completely different than how he was in everything else. It’s part of why he loved the game so much.

“I didn’t want to ruin my friendship with George. He means too much to me.” Clay said softly.

“Well I think you need to be a little more like Dream right now.” Nick responded.

Clay’s eyebrows furrowed. “What do you mean?”

“I mean take a jump that Clay *never* would, a risk. If you want to fix things you’re going to have to reach for it. Put yourself in a vulnerable position.”

Clay’s thoughts paused and he pondered over this. He knew he had to make things up, he had to open up. He was going to tell George how he *really* felt. He just didn’t know if it would be enough. Did he even deserve to be George’s best friend after all this? To be something more?

“Dude I can hear you over thinking. Seriously, stop that.” Nick interrupted.

Clay made a noise of protest and sat up on the bed. "It's just that...Nick what if i don't deser-"

"No. Shut up. Both of you fucked up okay? You both made mistakes, but you're best friends. You make each other happy. And you're both fucking in love with each other apparently so fix this Clay. *Fight* for it. Don't let this slip through your fingers. Go big or go home bitch." Nick said, leaving no room for arguments.

Clay snorted at Nick's vulgarity. He was feeling a bit more like himself after talking to Nick.

"Okay, you're right." Clay admitted, "I just think it won't be enough though."

"Ugghh" Nick groaned. "Clay don't get in your own he-"

"No, no, listen." Clay said, now standing up. "I mean like, I don't think it's enough to just show him my face and *apologize*." Clay said. He was trying to get this *right*. He needed to think hard about this.

"So you mean you want to do more?" Nick asked.

"Yes." Clay said, pacing once again in hopes of working out his thoughts.

"So like send him flowers or something?"

*Send him flowers?*

No, Clay wanted to go *big*. He had fucked up major and he needed to make it up to George. Doing shit like calling him up and showing him his face felt wrong. It *wasn't* sincere enough. It didn't just fix everything.

Technically it might've, but Clay just knew it wouldn't settle everything. He couldn't send him flowers either, but send? That seemed like a solid start to making up for things. He could send George something. It had to be something meaningful though. Something that showed how much he cared and how sorry he was. What could he send?

And then it hit him like a ton of bricks.

"I'm going to send myself."

There was a very long pause over the line. "...What?"

It was all coming together in his head now. If he was going to be vulnerable and take a risk he was going to go all out just like he would in-game.

Clay stopped pacing. "Yes. Nothing felt right or sincere enough. But what if I did it all in person? I could apologize in person as well. Tell him I *love* him in person. Show him who I am in person. I don't expect him to forgive me but I at least will show him how important he is to me."

"Wow, I actually think that's a good idea for once. I mean there's nothing that says I care like flying out to him just to make it up to him" Nick said somewhat sarcastically. "You're sure about it though? It is, *well*, a risk. He could take it badly. Him rejecting you will hurt way more in person. He could shut the door on your face. You could end u-"

"Okay dude I get it." Clay stopped him. "And yes, I'm sure. He's worth taking risks for."

Nick snorted. "That's fucking gross, but I'm happy for you."

Clay felt a small smile stretch across his face as relief washed over him.

“Thanks.” He said. “Seriously, thanks for being here.”

Clay’s eyes caught his PC in the corner of the room. He felt the itch to act now on his plan, and he wasted no time walking over to his desk.

“I’m going to go look at flights now.” He said.

“Ha, okay bud. You know I’m *always* here for you. Keep me updated.”

“I will.” Clay responded. “See ya.” He pressed on the screen and ended the call.

Finally, he breathed out a sigh of relief, he was going to do something about the mess he had made. Despite guilt still weighing heavy on him, he felt a little lighter with the idea that he had somewhat of a plan. Even though this was going to be one of the hardest things he had done, he was going to do it. The idea of it still made him nervous though, being completely vulnerable to someone in person made him want to vomit. But it wasn’t just anyone though, it was George, the kindest person he knew.

He stared down at his computer screen with determination. He *was* going to fix this, or at least fail at trying.

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry this chapter might've been kind of boring. I added some texting but that's obviously not going to be the main focus it's just for now since they're not in person. PLEASE scream at me in the comments I'm so lonely lmao.

Editing this chapter was a bitch, my head is killing me. Formatting these chapters are awfulllll it makes me rage. Also I'm sorry I probably miss so many little things like weird spacing and stuff, but I've read this chapter so much and I can't anymore. I just can't read anymore of my own writing at this point. ALSO SOMEBODY PLEASE HELP ME I DON'T KNOW HOW COMMAS WORK WHAT IS A COMPLEX SENTENCE WHAT?!?!

Anyway working on the next chapter as I am posting this guys, I don't sleep send help. Again tell me how u feel about the chapter in the comments or we can just chat :) I need friends lol.

This fic is way longer than I planned dudez. It was just all gonna be like 6000 words at first but uhhh?? I popped off. Somebody stop meeeee

# I Know Everything Will Be Alright

## Chapter Notes

HUGE THANKS TO authorized\_trash for editing this also and Nifawiwa!

This chapter is dedicated to Nifawiwa BECAUSE WITH HER I WOULD'VE DELETED THIS CHAPTER AND STARTED ALL OVER LMAO. I got stuck on smth and she let me brainstorm/bounce ideas off her and gave me some brilliant stuff. So seriously, this one is for you! I can't thank you enough. I really tried to make it a good read for you <3

This is the calm before the storm, enjoy!

Oh yeah, also again the chapter titles and title are from the song Time by NF.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

George stared blankly at the dripping tap in the bathroom, gripping the edges of his sink tightly. The repetitive sound of the water hitting the white porcelain bounced off the walls and reverberated throughout the small room. The noise was soothing, it was steady and had a sort of rhythm to it. Unknowingly, he had timed his breathing in tune with the drops falling. He felt frozen as he stared down at the sink.

It had been hard for him to get out of bed this morning even just to use the restroom. The argument last night had left him in a kind of daze. He had spent a while crying on his floor trying to calm down after ending the call. When he had calmed enough he had gone straight to bed to lay down. He hadn't slept much but he had calmed down and had time to process everything.

When he woke up in the morning he had felt shitty. There was a dull pain in his head and a tightness in his chest that flared up whenever he thought of last night. His face had felt disgusting with dried tears so the first thing he had on his mind was washing his face.

That's how he ended up staring down into the sink like it was some kind of complex art piece to examine. Really he was just delaying time, procrastinating the inevitable. He hadn't touched his phone or computer since last night. In fact, he had powered both off completely in order to avoid facing the reality of the situation.

He knew Dream had texted him, not because he had checked his phone, but because he had heard the others voice call out to him before he had ended the call. He knew his best friend and the quiver in his voice was all telling. He *knew* that he was going to want to apologize. There was also the fact that George had dropped the huge bomb of being in love with him, but he was trying not to think about that just yet.

Here's the thing, George knew that everything that Dream had said in that conversation wasn't true. It just *couldn't* be true. It was all just empty words that spilled out in the heat of the moment. Except they still *stuck* with him, just hearing them in Dream's voice was enough to hurt. Worse was he knew he had to apologize for everything that he said as well. He had been unnecessarily cruel to his best friend.

They had both fucked up.

There was a sharp pain that shot up through his arm like a hot wire. His hold on the sink had tightened unknowingly, and at the sting he released it.

“Shit.” He muttered.

With a sigh, he ran his hands through his already messy hair. He needed a little more space before facing what had happened. Reluctantly, he pushed himself away from the counter and entered his room. His phone was still on his bedside table where he had powered it off last night.

He walked over and picked it up, pressing the button to power it on. While he waited for it to turn on he considered what he could do. He knew he was going to have to reply to some messages, and he even considered talking to someone for advice before brushing that off. He always dealt with things like this a little better on his own, he liked to resolve issues on his own unless they were too hard to do so. Maybe he could text Sapnap though considering he was a little in over his head with this.

He wondered if Dream had texted someone about what had happened considering George had dropped off the face of the planet after confessing.

His question was answered when his phone powered on and he saw multiple messages from Sapnap pop up on the screen. Quickly he unlocked it, clicking on the messages. Dream had texted him quite a bit as he suspected but he didn't open them quite yet, instead clicking on his messages with Sapnap.

**George & Sapnap:**

**Sapnap:** Hey dude u okay?

**Sapnap:** Dream is being weird and told me u had a fight. Said u hung up on him pretty upset.

**Sapnap:** He's worried abt u but I told him to chill. I'm worried about u too.

**Sapnap:** I'm here to talk about it when you're ready okay? Don't be weird about reaching out on this cuz I know how close you and Clay are.

**Sapnap:** I care about you man. Lmk when ur ready <3

George snorted softly, for as much of an asshole Sapnap could be he really did care about people. A warmth began to bloom in his chest and he couldn't help but feel lucky to have such great friends.

**George:** Hey. I'm doing okay and just got out of bed.

**Sapnap:** Oh bless man. I was starting to get worried. Do you wanna talk about stuff?

**George:** How much did Dream tell you? Also is he okay??

**Sapnap:** Ew I hate how the first thing the both of you do after a fight is ask about each other through me.

**Sapnap:** But srsly dude he's okay so dw about him. How are you doing? Want to call?

**Sapnap:** Also he told me everything.

**George:** I'm okay I guess, and I don't need to call.

**George:** Everything?

**Sapnap:** yeah like. Idk if you wanted to talk about this but he said you said you loved him.

George groaned and covered his face as he felt it flush. He was trying not to think about it, because he still felt highly embarrassed. Just barely remembering the confession made him want to throw himself out the window, but hearing that someone else knew about it made him want to *yeet* himself into the stratosphere.

**George:** I really don't. Can we please not mention it and seriously man no teasing.

**Sapnap:** Dude don't worry. There's no way I'm ever teasing you about something serious like that.

**George:** Thanks.

George relaxed, feeling the ever present tension in his muscles ease up.

**George:** He's waiting for me to respond isn't he?

**Sapnap:** yeah

**Sapnap:** No pressure but u two definitely need to talk.

George groaned feeling the increasing urge to throw his phone. He was embarrassed, he couldn't feel anything but *shame* thinking of the night before. Every part of his brain was yelling at him to just avoid, to *run*, but he knew he couldn't do that to Dream. He stabilized his state of mind before replying to Sapnap.

**George:** I think I'm ready to talk to him.

**Sapnap:** You don't have 2 yet if you don't want 2.

**George:** I'm just still a little hurt but I really want to apologize. I'm also just in shock because we've never fought anything close to what was.

**Sapnap:** Yeah no. I'd be shocked if you weren't still hurt. But yeah I think apologizing will be good for both of you. I know you two can work it out.

**George:** Yeah I know. I just think I need some more space too after all that to process everything. I'm still a little mad at him, and I really want answers. I'm also mad with myself for being kind of a dick

**George:** You know how closed off he is. He trusted me to give him space and respect his boundaries and I kind of trampled over them last night.

**George:** Everything is going to change after this huh?

**Sapnap:** I mean yeah. After a fight things usually change. But I think it'll be for the better.

**Sapnap:** You guys needed to work this out way earlier but you're both too stubborn. It blew up in your faces bc ur both idiots.

**Sapnap:** And definitely apologize for crossing his boundaries. You know how he is. He's like a scared cat because he lashes out when you get too up in his stuff.

**Sapnap:** Not excusing anything he said because he was an asshole for sure. But just saying you both fucked up and were dicks to each other. You both forgot to give each other respect but that's just how it is when emotions are high like that.

**George:** You're right. I feel shitty about hurting him like that. I know we'll forgive each other and I already kind of do, but it's still fresh and I need today to myself. I'm going to text him now though since I don't want to ghost him.

**Sapnap:** Sounds good. I know you'll both get through this! Good luck.

**George:** Thank you.

George sighed before exiting out of the chat with Sapnap. He did feel a lot better after talking to him, but he still felt the need to talk through things with Dream before he could feel good enough to move past everything. He opened up his messages with Dream and quickly read through the ones sent last night. His heart beat a little faster seeing the desperation and his heartstrings tugged at the many apologies. He had been right in knowing that Dream would regret it.

He worried his lip and he stared holes through Dream's contact. He was nervous to talk to Dream and face everything but he knew he *had* to.

Part of him was annoyed that even when they had fought and both hurt each other that Dream could still be worried about George like the caring bastard he was. He was a really fucking good best friend, annoyingly so. Getting Sapnap to check in on him even though George had hurt Dream just as much as Dream had hurt him that night. George had never had to question why he fell in love with him.

There was one message sent this morning after the apology.

**George & dREaM:**

**dREaM:** Hey, I hope you're doing okay. Whenever you're ready, I'm here to talk.

George felt himself get a little emotional at seeing the clear care the other directed at him even after their fight. He just supposed that was the thing about best friends. No matter what the fight or silly argument you always had the other's back. It made everything so much more complex.

**George:** Hey. I'm ready to talk.

George was shocked to get a reply back almost immediately.

**dREaM:** Okay. You sure?

**George:** Yes.

**dREaM:** Do you want to call?

George took in a sharp breath, feeling his nerves multiply at the idea of having to face Dream. He



was nervous to talk to him and hear his voice, but he also wanted to talk to him as soon as possible.

**George:** Yeah I think that's a good idea.

Almost immediately after sending that his phone lit up with Dream's contact image. Despite his anxiety shooting to unnatural levels, George found himself pressing the answer button without hesitation. He moved the phone up to his ear and closed his eyes to steady his nerves before speaking.

"Hello?" He questioned softly.

"*George.*" Dream said with a rush of breath.

His name felt heavy coming from Dream's mouth. Dream hadn't spoken loudly but hearing him say his name like that knocked some of the air from George's breath. He sounded relieved and there were so many emotions packed into his own name, George couldn't decode it. He had never heard his name spoken with such *emotion*.

"Dream." He responded without second thought.

"Um, you can call me Clay."

George's heart nearly beat out of his chest. Dream- Clay had never asked him to use his real name before. George had always found it a shame because it was such a good name. Maybe he was biased but he loved the way that it rolled off his tongue like smooth honey.

In his opinion it felt like it was meant to be spoken. He refrained from using it very often because Clay always tripped up after hearing his name. He did find himself slipping up and calling him that occasionally though. He usually only did it teasingly until well- last night.

"Okay, *Clay.*"

There was a silence from the other side of the call and a very stupid part of George thought it might be the other feeling flustered, but he banished that as quickly as it came. As the silence continued George began to fumble with the hem of his shirt. Things felt a little tense and awkward which was to be expected, but he was struggling with what to say.

"You're my best friend." Clay stated breaking the silence.

"What?"

"You're my *best* friend George."

"Oh." He swallowed thickly.

"Yeah. I just, I'm sorry. You were right about everything. I regret everything I said." Clay sounded pained.

George cleared his throat before speaking, "I regret what I said too. Dre- uh Clay, I shouldn't have pushed you like that. I was having a rough day and I put some of it on you. I crossed a line."

"I know. It's okay though."

George's brows furrowed and his face twisted at Clay's words. "It's not though. I-"

"It is because I *forgive* you. I mean yeah it sucked, but I hurt you too and we both went too far."

"Oh."

He didn't know what else to say to that. He supposed it made sense, but a part of him still felt guilt for what had happened.

"George I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I didn't mean anything I said and I wish I could take it all back. I was angry and insecure. I was scared and then I hurt you. And I never wanted to do that. I *never* meant to do that. There's so many things I wish I could go back and change and I can't, but all I can do is change *now*." He paused and seemed to contemplate his words. "So George I am *so* sorry." There was so much emotion and sincerity in those words.

He felt his heart melt at the pure sincerity in Clay's words. Clay couldn't take back any of the words he said, but the words he was saying now were beginning to heal the wounds that had been left. He had never thought any of what Clay was saying was true and that was because of one reason, because all the things Clay had ever said to him contrasted them. His actions always showed he cared, that he thought George as a close friend.

George felt his mood lighten a bit as he responded. "*I forgive* you. And I'm sorry too. Clay I knew what I was saying would hurt you, and I said them anyway. I promise not to do that to you again. And I'm really *truly* sorry." He said full of sincerity.

"Thank you. I forgive you."

George relaxed at those words, feeling the tension that had plagued him begin to fade away. They had both forgiven each other and it was a huge relief. They could never stay mad at each other for long in the first place so it shouldn't have been such a surprise.

He felt better having apologized to Clay, and he knew they would make up, but things were still off. He felt like he needed to make it up to the other in some way. Do something especially nice to show he was sorry and that he cared. His shoulders slumped and he fidgeted mindlessly as he contemplated what he could do.

"George I- About what you said about lov-"

Right away George snapped out of his thoughts, his eyes widened and heart quickened as realized what was coming. "Wait." He said cutting the other off with a sense of urgency. "Can we not talk about that right now." He spoke quickly feeling his hands grow clammy.

He cringed at just how desperate he sounded. His heart rate had gone through the roof and he was beginning to worry with how often it occurred he was going to have heart problems. George regretted confessing more than anything right now. He really didn't have the guts to be rejected after everything that had happened. Just the idea of hearing Clay say he wasn't interested in George was consuming him with dread.

"What?" Clay asked.

"I just don't feel okay enough for that." George admitted, gripping the phone in his hand a little tighter from nerves. "I'm still shaken up from last night and I- I just can't deal with that right now. I *promise* we can talk about it later, but I can't deal with anything big like that right now." He was cringing internally at this point, hoping the floor would open up and consume him, but he pushed forward. "I can't deal with the rejection right now."

"Wait, but Geor-"

“Clay, *Please?*” George begged, cutting Clay off.

There was a pregnant pause. There was a weird tension in the air that wasn't assuring in the slightest. George tried to regulate his breathing as a sick kind of anticipation crept in on him.

Clay sure was taking a while to say something. Maybe he was uncomfortable with the whole thing and asking him to hold off was a little bit selfish. At least George knew he wasn't homophobic. He couldn't help but worry though, he didn't want to end up pushing Clay away with his annoying feelings.

“*Okay*, George.” Clay said breaking the silence and saving George from his overthinking. “Just, you know I *care* about you right?”

George couldn't hold back the smile that grew on his face. His entire body was buzzing with warmth now. Unlike the hot embarrassment that had consumed him before this felt like a soft thrumming warmth spreading around his entire body. It was familiar to him as Clay often made him feel alright with the shit he said. Clay was such a softie and George was weak to it.

His words were soothing, and some of the nerves had vanished. Saying he still cared must've been Clay's way of telling him that they were going to be able to remain friends despite George's feelings.

He shook himself from his thoughts and responded, unable to prevent the fondness leaking into his voice, “Yeah, of course you idiot.”

There was a soft chuckle from the other end of the call and George's heart ached with love and longing.

“Okay good.” Clay spoke, voice light. “But hey, speaking of waiting to talk about that can we- can we wait to talk about the whole face thing?”

“Oh.” George had somewhat forgotten about that, but he was relieved that Clay had brought it up “Yeah we can.”

“Cool just for *a couple of days* , but George I promise I'll explain anything you want to hear.” He paused and George could hear something akin to nervousness in his voice.

“That's cool with me. Is there anything else?” He asked.

“Um, no not really. I just *may* have *also* decided to *show you my face* . But other than that I think we're all covered” He spoke casually but quickly, there still being an edge of anxiety in his voice.

“What?” George questioned. Something seemed not quite right about what he had said, George contemplated it for a second, the words still stuck in his head.

Then it hit him and his jaw dropped. “Wait WHAT?” He couldn't help but raise his voice, it felt like there was excitement coursing through his blood.

His thoughts ran a mile a minute, racing to comprehend the situation. He was in an odd state of disbelief and excitement.

He practically tripped up his words as he spoke, “Wait, wait, wait. You know you don't have to right? Like I really just want to kn-”

Clay cut him off, “I *want* to show you George.”

George froze, and repeated what Clay had said over and over in his head. A large smile spread across his face without resistance and he tried to bite it back to no avail.

“*Oh.*” He said softly, unable to keep the joy from his voice.

There was an odd strangled noise from the other side of the call before Clay responded, “You deserve it.”

George’s heart was definitely going to murder him now, it was practically *exploding* . He felt giddy and high off of sweetness. It was way too much for him. Clay really didn’t make it hard at all to love him.

“*Claayyy* stop.” He protested jokingly, in hopes of steering the conversation to less feeling inducing direction.

“I’m being serious George.” The tone shifted again and Clay responded much firmer this time, “*You do* . You’re my best friend.”

George bit harder into his lip, feeling his smile stretch past what should be physically possible. His whole face was probably red, and he just knew he looked like an idiot in love. Clay was way too sweet for his own good sometimes. When George got diabetes he was going to sue Clay.

There was a light feeling in the air between them. Neither spoke and instead they sat comfortably for a while, breathing gently into the silence. It was times like these when George almost felt like Clay was with him. Even if they were only connected by the call, he could hear Clay’s quiet breathing, close his eyes and picture him next to him, the connection between them was *palpable*.

Once again George found himself dwelling on thinking of things to make it up to Clay. He wanted to solidify the idea that he cared about him. So it had to be something special. Something just for Clay. He knew that Clay was big on physical affection and any sweet words. But obviously physical affection was out of the picture because they were too far apart for that. He was left with saying something nice. It couldn’t be any old compliment though. He mulled it over it, maybe he could tell him something right now?

Before he could come up with anything though Clay broke the silence,

“Hey, are we okay?” He asked, so quietly George almost missed it. “Like are we going to be okay?”

“Yeah.” George chuckled softly. “Yeah, *we are.*”

Clay laughed softly and George’s heart fluttered. “*I’m so glad.*”

With the wave of fondness that crashed into him came the aftershock of intense longing. George knew it would take a while to accept he truly could *never* have what he wanted. He took in a soothing breath hoping to exhale some of the yearning he felt.

“I think I’m going to go cause I need some space, but we’ll talk later?” George inquired.

“Yeah. I’d like that.” Clay said faintly.

“Oh and George?”

“Yeah?” He asked tentatively, wondering if he knew where this was going.

*“On a scale of 1-10 how bad do you wish I was there?”*

George stilled, the breath knocked out of his lungs. That was *the* thing. The one thing Clay had *always* asked jokingly at the end of their late night calls. *Their thing*. And for some reason this time didn't sound like so much of a joke.

“You know I *never* answer that Clay.” He responded despite the breath being stolen from him.

*“You know I never stop asking.”*

## Chapter End Notes

So how was it? This was such an annoying chapter to write lol. STRAP IN FOR THE NEXT ONE BOIS. Also don't forget to scream at me in the comments because I am lonely.

Seriously, thanks for all the support. I would not be able to update every day without it. <3

# I'll Be Here Waiting: Part One

## Chapter Notes

Hey so as some will notice, the chapter count will have gone from 5 to 7. That's mainly cause this chapter was way longer than expected so it'll be in two parts. This first part is like 5,000 long and the other was maybe 4,000? Anyway, I may take a break after this and a few more days to complete chapters since my school has started again.

We're in the home stretch with this one, and I know I said it wouldn't be angsty after chap 1 but I lied.

Also!! This is fully dedicated to Who\_Is\_To\_Say\_Im\_Infallible. Both part 1 and 2. She said jump and I said how high. So thank her for this! I am praying this chapter is emotional lol. I am posting it while she's asleep, so it'll be a nice (hopefully) surprise for her to wake up to.

**TRIGGER WARNING:** This chapter features some potentially upsetting stuff, if you have issues with claustrophobia, or panic attacks please don't read.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

George stared, absolutely transfixed at his bathroom door, it was cracked open by a minuscule amount, but the white light from within was flooding his room. There was a noise he couldn't place that was drifting through the cracks and into his room as well. He couldn't sleep with the light on. He could *never* sleep with a light on. But why didn't he *remember* leaving it on, he could've *sworn* it was off before he went to bed. For some reason he felt absolutely unnerved, the hair on the back of his neck prickled.

Had he left the light on?

Why was it *open*?

What was that noise?

**Why did he have the very *distinct* feeling that someone was *in there*?**

He continued to stare at the door, not sensing any movement behind it. The longer he stared at it the *worse* the feeling got. There was a pit in his stomach that only grew the longer he stared at the light bathing his floor, the noise was persistent too. He urged himself to just *look away*. But was completely sucked into it, he had *never* left the light on before he went to sleep. Why the hell had he not noticed. Never had he felt so *strongly* like he was losing his sanity.

Dread was filling him the more he pondered about the *fucking light*. The sound was vigorous and non-stop but he couldn't for the life of him name it, and it was driving him up the wall. There *had* to be a rational explanation. But his intuition was screaming that there was something *wrong*. His *entire* body was screaming something was wrong.

So he sat frozen on his bed, eyes fixated to the door, unblinking.

The noise wasn't loud, but in the otherwise deathly silent room it was *deafening* . It was a soft sound, a “shhhhhhh” that had yet to falter. It was almost mocking him, taunting him to remain silent. But it's not like he could say anything if he tried, his mouth was *iron* shut.

Inexplicably, the urge to scream began to itch within him, it was kicking and scratching at him and yet his mouth remained *locked* shut. He was *begging* himself to move at this point. The feeling of unnerve was growing stronger. It was practically unbearable to sit and watch the same spot of the door, but he had no choice. He willed every cell in his body to move, *Just move*.

Then everything within him snapped, and it felt as if his body shuddered to life.

Abruptly, he stood. On wobbly feet he approached, feeling like a baby horse first learning to walk as he stumbled to the door. The noise was getting louder and clearer the closer he got to the bathroom. His heart was beating hard, and he raised a shaky arm to push the door open.

*He probably just left the light on.*

*It was probably nothing.*

*Nobody was in there.*

*It was just him being unusually paranoid.*

He was jolted from his thoughts and his reach as he stepped in something undeniably *wet* , and he jumped back, eyes finally ripping away from the door and down to the floor. He was right at the door and there was *water* pooled on the floor. He had disrupted the cool liquid with his foot, not having noticed the reflective liquid. His head kicked into overdrive as he suddenly recognized the noise as the sound of *running water* .

His head snapped back up to the door, and he stepped through the water once again, this time pushing the door open and stepping into the bathroom. For a second his eyes adjusted to the rush of light before darting around the room, scanning every inch of it.

There was *nobody* in here.

He looked down, the floor was wet and the water covered the entirety of it.

His eyes drifted up and landed on the sink.

*The tap was on.*

It was spilling over the counter, escaping the overflowing bowl of the sink, splashing onto the floor below and *covering* the floor. He rushed over to the counter, muttering a curse from his mouth as his feet grew cold from all the water. With an outstretched hand he grabbed the handle that had been turned all the way on. He attempted to twist it back towards him.

It didn't budge.

“What the fuck?” He stated, beginning to feel a sense of urgency overtake his confusion.

He twisted harder, his knuckle turning white with his grip, his hand was cold from where the metal pressed into it. It still wouldn't turn and he removed his hand to adjust his grip.

***Slam.***

The loud sound of the door shutting echoed around the room and George threw himself away from

the sink, back hitting the wall in front of it. His heart had frozen at the noise before kicking into *absolute* overdrive. His head snapped to the now shut door, but there was nobody there.

“Hello?” He asked into the empty room, voice trembling.

“George .” A voice replied, reverberating around the tiny room and drowning out the sound of the running tap.

George’s heart stopped and he pressed himself further against the wall. He *recognized* that voice, he would recognize it *anywhere* .

“Dream.” He responded eyes traveling around the room rapidly, there was no one here, where was his voice coming from? “Wha-”

“Why?” Dream asked, voice flat.

“Why? Dream *what’s* going on.” George replied, beginning to pull away from the wall a bit but still scared out of his mind.

“The room is going to *overflow* George.”

George willed his eyes back to the sink, mouth slightly opening in shock. The water came more rapidly now, practically bursting from the tap. It cascaded down the counter and onto the floor, and to George’s absolute *horror* the water had risen to above his ankles. He should’ve noticed sooner considering it was absolutely *freezing* . He looked to his right to the now shut door. His eyes traveled down the door, the end of the wood met the floor and there was no longer a gap between the two. It was trapping the water in the room with him, and he felt a spike of fear pierce through him.

He removed himself from the wall, reaching out to the door knob before being interrupted by the disembodied voice of his friend.

“You can’t open it Georgie, it’s *locked*.” It was undeniably Dream, but his voice was slightly off.

He couldn’t understand what was going on, it wasn’t making sense. The more he thought about it the worse he felt, his fear was growing. He stared down at the floor, the water was making its way towards his calves. That was very *alarming* . He had to turn the water off or he would-

The weight of the situation seemed to crash into him and his breathing became absolutely frantic. The water was *still* rising.

“Dream!” He choked out, rushing to the sink and grasping the handle. “Help me turn this off!” He commanded.

“I can’t.” The other replied seemingly uncaring.

George clenched his teeth, annoyed with the lack of urgency from his friend. He tugged on the handle more, even trying to twist it in the other direction but to no avail. He stared powerlessly at the water still running from the tap. The water was climbing up his calves at this point, and it was drenching his pants.

“Dream it’s filling up.” He stated, eyes stuck on the water overflowing from the sink. It really shouldn’t be possible that it was filling the room so rapidly. There was something very *very* wrong.



Dream's voice interrupted his thoughts. "Who are you?"

He startled from his worry and felt confusion seep back in. "What?" He questioned, scanning the room once again for where the voice was coming from.

"*Who are you?*" Dream repeated, voice dropped low.

It sounded like it came from all around him and not a single direction. This *really* wasn't right. Instead of thinking too hard about the voice he thought about the question. It only confused him more and his brows furrowed.

*Who was he? Did Dream forget who he was?*

"George." He responded simply.

The water was going to reach the back of his knee if he didn't stop the water. The tap must have broken or perhaps the knob had gotten stuck. George supposed it could be rust. He grabbed it once again and tried to put more force behind his turning.

"No, *who* are you?" Dream asked again and George felt irritation claw at him, the knob still wouldn't budge, it was *stubborn*. He had never noticed how hard it was to turn until now, had it not turned smoothly so easily the other day?

He realized he had left Dream hanging and finally replied, "What do you mean?" He asked, perplexed with the conversation.

"Who are YOU George?" He questioned again, voice laced with anger.

"I don't-" George yanked hard on the knob, pain shooting into his hand. "I don't know what you mean!" He stated, more frustrated.

The water was past the back of his knee and George was starting to panic more. Why was Dream not concerned? What the hell was he asking about? Did he even *know* what was going on?

George clenched his teeth. The knob wasn't moving even a centimeter, and he was using all his strength. His arm muscles shook as he pulled on it, clenching so tightly he feared they would tear.

"Who are you George?!" Dream shouted, it shattered through the noise of the water and rang in George's ears.

His grip tightened on the knob into something almost too painful to maintain. "Don't fucking play with me right now asshole." He spat. "Now, can you *please* help me with the tap? It's going to fill the entire room." There was no response.

The water was not slowing down at all, nor was it draining, or if it was it wasn't a substantial amount since the level was continuing to rise. What would happen if the knob didn't turn? Surely it had to eventually, right? George stared at the water again. Well if it didn't there was really no way to get out of this. If he didn't work fast the knob would be submerged and there was no way he'd be able to grip on to it well enough to turn it. Then he would be trapped with the water rising and he wo-

His fear heightened and he began to breathe heavily. He put two hands on the knob, gripping until it felt like his hand would break and pulled hard, throwing all of his body weight into it. It stretched his shoulders violently and a pain so sharp shot through him, he had to release his hold.

*No, no, no, no.*

He was freaking out, he couldn't do this on his own,

"DREA-"

"It's not going to stop until you answer me George." Dream said harshly, interrupting his shout.

The breath knocked out of him at the words, not because they had been particularly shocking, but because the sound came from right *next* to his ear. Usually he was happy to hear Dream's voice, but that was the *last* thing he felt. His hands clenched in fear and he looked up in the mirror slowly. There towering *right* behind him in the mirror was Dream, George's heart stopped and he found himself paralyzed.

He stared at the man from the mirror. He stood right behind him, head leaned over to peek out and over George's shoulder. He was wearing what George *assumed* to be his green hoodie, and a pair of jeans. George's heart rate ran faster the longer he took in the other. His eyes trailed up his long legs to his waist bathed in the hoodie, then to his wide shoulders and up his neck. Then his eyes stopped on the most *shocking* part of Dream. *He had no mask*.

His features were indistinguishable. The only things George could make out were short dirty blonde hair that curled near his cheeks, slightly tanned skin, and the *allusion* of freckles. George couldn't see any details, but he could sense them. He knew there was a nose, eyes, eyebrows, bone structure, but none of it was clear. He felt *fuzzy*.

He couldn't see it but could sense Dream's mouth was a wide smile. The longer George looked the more blurry his face seemed, and he was beginning to get a little unnerved. Dream was staring *right* at him.

"Drea-"

"That's not my name." He spoke sharply.

George's throat felt like it closed at the tone of voice. He saw Clay step closer towards him in the mirror. He was so close now he could feel the warmth of the other radiating at his back. It was setting his nerve endings on fire, he felt like he was tingling where Clay was nearly touching. Unable to take it anymore, George whirled around, and their eyes met.

Clay had leaned down to meet him face to face, so they were nearly at perfect eye level with each other. It was impressive considering their height difference, but George was only thinking about how much worse of a position he was in now that they were face to face.

"Clay" he breathed out, in the space between them.

The other's mouth quirked up into a smile and something twisted within George.

"Who are you Georgie?" He asked again, this time softer.

George's heart fluttered at the sweet tone. His mouth dried up and his voice came out rough when he answered, "I told you I'm George."

The water was still running but Clay didn't seem to mind. He only laughed softly and shook his head at George's answer. He gestured toward the mirror with his own head. Stuck in a daze from being so close, George languidly turned his head to stare into it like Clay had wanted and froze. His eyes were glued to the reflection that met him.

In the mirror staring back at him was his own face, except it *wasn't*, he was *wearing* Dream's mask. It was white as usual and a familiar black smile curved up exactly as the real thing. The only difference was there were cut outs where his eyes were, allowing George to see through it.

"Don't you see now?" Dream asked gently, grabbing under his chin and forcing him to face him once again.

He had pressed closer to George, one arm holding his chin and the other rested on the counter next to his hip. His touch was electric, but he was trapping him in, pushing him against the counter, backing him into it and *looming* over him.

When he pressed against the counter fully, water rushed along his back, soaking his shirt. It had risen to just below George's stomach now. He hadn't been paying too much attention as Clay had enthralled him.

Said man leaned in, eyes set on where George's lips should be, and George felt his senses light on fire. His gaze remained intense as his eyes flickered up to George's own, then back down.

"So, tell me now. Who are you *really* George?" He was right in George's face, they were breathing the same air. "*Show me.*" He demanded, barely a whisper.

His hand moved from George's chin to the edge of the mask, he gently lifted it but it remained stuck on George's face. He could feel it pull slightly at his skin, it felt *attached* to him.

"Are you my best friend?" Clay asked, still pulling on the mask.

George found himself nodding.

"Then won't you *please* tell me who you are?" Clay asked, sounding sad.

"It's stuck." George whispered between them.

Clay was so close to him, George's senses were filled with him. His scent, his voice, his *face*. He felt the urge to be closer, lean up and meet the other's lips with his own, but he held back. Even this close wasn't enough for him, and he was feeling desperate for the distance between them to disappear.

"Are you my *real* friend?" Clay asked.

"Yes." George answered without hesitation.

"Do you love me?" Clay asked, smirking in a way that screamed flirting.

George's brain stalled as he stared at the man. He was gorgeous, up in his space, and sounding like that? It was *wrong*. Doing funny things to George's brain, yet still he answered.

"Yes."

Clay leaned even closer, his hold on George's chin was searing.

"Then tell me who you are, *show me baby.*"

George choked, heat rushed to his face.

"I-I can't." he stuttered, the water was to his *chest* now.

Clay let go of the mask and dropped his hand into the water, he stood up straight to his full height.

He was frowning. “Then I can’t *help* you George.”

George felt his breathing skyrocket and he grabbed on to Clay’s wrist. Those words twisted his stomach, and he felt sick.

“Wait please. *Please*, don’t go, *help me*.” He begged, uncaring on how pathetic he sounded.

Clay reached out and cupped George’s face with one hand, titling it up. The breath caught in George’s throat, the hand on the side of his head was burning holes into his skin, and he dropped his hold on the other’s wrist.

Without much warning Clay leaned down and kissed the mask, right where George’s lips were hidden. He stayed there for a second, his other arm reaching out to wrap around George’s middle and pull them chest to chest. He was warm where their bodies met, and George felt himself melt. All too soon Clay pulled away. Arm still wrapped around George’s middle, he stared intensely into George’s eyes. He opened his mouth, breath fanning on the mask between their faces as he spoke,

“This never would’ve happened if you just would’ve *told* me.” He exhaled, sounding forlorn.

Then before George could speak he disappeared.

“CLAY!” He shouted, all comfort ripped away.

George reached out to the empty air where Clay had once been. When he met nothing he began to hyperventilate, his breaths were short and shallow, the water was rising around him and he had to tilt his face up to prevent drowning, the water was freezing. The place where their bodies had once connected had the warmth stolen from it.

*“I love you George, come on just say it back.”*

Clay was gone, but his voice still echoed around the room.

*“Don’t you wanna spend all your time with me?”*

“What?” George panted, still hyperventilating.

*“Aren’t I your best friend Georgie?”*

*“Hey George, 1-10 how b-”*

It occurred to him that these were all things he had heard Clay ask before, and he shut his eyes. He didn’t understand. Why was this happening? Why was the water rising? Why was he hearing all these things?

*“You don’t even deserve to know why I won’t.”*

*“If you need to see my face just because you’re my friend then maybe you’re not a real fucking friend!”*

George sucked in a harsh breath, he was swimming now, desperately trying to stay above water. These were all from the fight, and with each line the voice only grew louder. They bounced off the walls around him and assaulted his ears. He was tearing up now, he was going to *die*, the water was rising *fast*.

And then heard his voice.

*“The fucking audacity Dream. How long have I been your fucking friend?!”*

“Stop.” He choked out. Whether it was directed to the rising water which was driving him closer to the ceiling, or to his own voice echoing loudly in the room he didn’t know.

*“You are scared! You’re just a scared fucking boy Dream!”*

“Please.” He pleaded, tears running down his face and mixing into the water. “I’m sorry, I’m so sorry.” His hands were touching the ceiling, and he was craning his neck up as far as he could. Taking what he *knew* would be his last breaths. “I’m sorry, just make it stop!” He agonized.

*“You’re just so fucking insecure!”*

His voice began to echo around the room, each line repeating over and over, he remembered each one, each line that had spilled from his own mouth, full of *poison* . All that had spilled from his mouth that night was poison, and now he was *drowning in it* .

“Just come back Clay.” He sobbed face pressed against the ceiling, as water lapped at his eyes and into his mouth. “I was wrong, I-I’ll tell you, just please- please help me.” He was crying harder now, he knew this was the end. “I’m sorry.” He broke.

And then he was *under*.

The voices fully muffled before falling quiet, only the sound of water filled his ears. Panic seized him but he tried to remain calm, the sobs wracking his body made him shake in the water, but he couldn’t let them out. He opened his eyes under the water, seeing himself and his bathroom fully submerged, he was suspended in the liquid, powerless.

He tried to push off the wall and swim to the door. His clothes weighed him down and he had to fight against the water to get within distance of the door. He was freezing, shivering, but he reached out and grasped the door knob. He was running out of air fast, and he grew frantic. He twisted the door knob, but the door wouldn’t open. His lungs were spasming periodically now and he let go of the door, curling in on himself.

He was too late.

His lungs spasmed so hard he thought they might explode, they were *molten* . No longer in control of his body his mouth opened and he was breathing in water, but it felt like *fire* . He thrashed and kicked out, clawing at his throat in a silent scream. His thoughts were scrambled and all he could think about was air. He beat at the walls, pleading and fighting with the last bit of life he had left.

It was all too much.

*He couldn’t breathe. He was dying.*

---

He lurched out of bed, falling to the floor hard panting, choking on nothing, desperately filling his lungs with air. His hands were wrapped around his throat and terror beat fierce in his heart. Vaguely he registered that he was sobbing, and quickly his eyes darted around his room. *His room*. He was still in bed before his fall, but now he was on the hard ground. His sight landed on his bathroom door, *the light was on* .

He screamed.

He sat up and scrambled away, feet and hands pushing him further across the floor until he slammed hard into his bedside table, and everything on it clattered to the floor.

*It was a dream, it was a dream, it was a dream.* He repeated to himself, tearing his eyes from the door and instead looking at the floor. He attempted to take deep breaths but his lungs were still shuddering from lack of it. All he felt was pure *terror*.

Why the fuck had he dreamed that, why the fuck-

*Clay- the fight.*

He half sobbed, half gasped. Why had he said all that? Why did he do all that? What had he done?

The words that had bounced around the bathroom were now bouncing in his head. Calling Clay insecure, saying he was just a scared boy. *Well look where George was now*, he was a *hypocrite*. He wanted all the thoughts to stop, but he couldn't prevent them from filling his head.

A wave of pure self hatred crashed into George, bringing a fresh round of tears. Clay had been right, *who was he?* He had always thought Clay was the one wearing the mask, but really hadn't he been wearing one too? Who was he to attack Clay like that, when *he* couldn't even be honest about his feelings for him.

He laughed joylessly through his tears at the stupidity of it all.

Why had he been so *blind*.

No matter how close the two had gotten there was always something in between them. He had assumed it was Clay, keeping something so important from him, shielding himself away with a mask. But how the *fuck* had he expected Clay to trust things wouldn't change the relationship between them, when George had *no trust* in it himself. How many times had he left Clay's questions unanswered in fear of Clay's love being conditional.

*"Do you love me?"*

*"Am I your best friend?"*

He only cried harder, curling in on himself and clutching his hair in his hands. After the fight there Clay was, going to take his mask off for George. And what had George promised? What was *he* doing to fix this? Expecting Clay to provide him answers when he wasn't even going to do it back. He had confessed, but what about *everything else*? He had blocked his own best friend out without realizing.

The guilt ate at him, and George felt himself spiral more. How could he fix this? How could he do something for Clay? He didn't even know how to take his own mask off. Just like the dream, Clay was going to reveal himself and what? Be met with George who was wearing his own mask? How was anything going to happen between them *then*? *He was just going to drown.*

It had been three days after the fight and Clay had forgiven him, but George still hadn't forgiven *himself*. He had to change things first, and he didn't know what, but now he *knew*.

If this was going to work out they *both* had to be vulnerable.

He removed one of his hands, allowing it to search the floor before it bumped into a familiar shape.

His body still shuddered with quiet sobs, as he grabbed it and put it in front of his face, turning his phone on. He knew it had fallen off the table when he knocked into it. He powered it on and began to use it, ignoring the tears that fell onto the screen in the process.

If he was going to fix this he was going to start *now*.

He clicked call on Clay's contact and let it ring.

If he was expecting Clay to be vulnerable, he had to be vulnerable too.

He tried to steady his breathing a bit as he waited to see if Clay would answer. He needed to be able to talk otherwise Clay would assume he was dying and call an ambulance.

To his utter surprise Clay picked up fairly quickly, interrupting his breathing exercises. "George? It's really late for you, everything okay?"

He took one last deep breath before speaking.

"Clay, I-" he let out a choked out laugh when he realized that he was talking to the real Clay. "You picked up," He finished unsure what to say.

"George?!" Clay asked again, voice raised and full of concern this time. "Are you okay? What's going on?" There was panic in the other's voice, and George felt his heart warm.

He was so relieved to have Clay on call with him. Just the idea of the other being with him helped him take some control over the crying.

"I'm not." He admitted despite the uncomfortable feeling that came with saying it. "Clay I- I'm so sorry."

"Wha- George. You alrea-"

"No." George said, cutting him off. "*Listen* to me." He said firmly, finally somewhat in control of his breathing. "I was wrong about a lot that night, and I need to make it up to you. You're going to show me your face? Well let me be honest with *you too*." He wiped away some of his tears that were about to fall to the floor.

"I *need* you Clay," He said, voice breaking. "You're my *best* friend. I'm scared too, scared of losing you. You're-" He laughed, tears falling faster now. "The *best* guy I know. I value you too much to lose you, so I just ended up shutting you out. So let me *show* you who *I am*. Let me do something for *you too*."

The line was quiet, and George knew it was because the other was thinking. He didn't know how he would react if their roles were reversed. If Clay has suddenly called him at night crying, what would he say? He'd probably be stuck on his own words, or desperately trying to make sense of the situation. He didn't think too long about it because clay broke the silence.

"Wow." Clay said, the word sounded heavy with something unidentifiable. "I mean, you *really* know how to keep a guy on his toes." He stated, *sadly*.

George couldn't help but laugh, it was shitty to know he was worrying Clay, but damn if the situation wasn't funny in a really dark way.

"You wouldn't want me any other way." He stated, breathing nearly back to normal.

“You have a point.” Clay said softly. “Now *seriously*, please tell me what happened. I’m *really* worried”

George’s heart ached hearing the sincerity in the other’s voice. He wasn’t going to tell him about the dream. Clay would probably get mad at himself in some weird way even though he wasn’t the one in the dream. Then he would feel more guilty about the fight, and honestly it wouldn’t be a good situation. So George decided to leave most stuff out.

“Just woke up and realized some stuff, I nee-” he swallowed. “Needed to hear your voice. We haven’t done our daily night calls since..” He trailed off.

“Yeah,” Clay responded quieter. “I miss them- I miss *you*.”

George’s heart throbbed, hearing Clay say that stirred up some yearning. Briefly he thought back to the dream, how it had felt to be pressed against the other in an embrace, but he quickly stopped when that memory soured.

George opened his mouth to ask, “Can we start call-”

“Yes.” Clay interrupted. “Please.”

A smile pulled at the corner of George’s lips, he was warm and all fear that lingered from the dream faded at the sound of Clay’s soothing voice. *Real* Clay’s voice.

“Are you, crying?” Clay asked tentatively, it was cute.

George reached up and touched his cheeks, they were a little damp but the tears had stopped falling.

“No, not anymore.” He said before taking a shaky breath. “Not when I’m with *you*.”

“I could really get used to you being open like this.” Clay admitted, he sounded fond.

They stayed on the line, eventually George calmed down enough that he could turn his bathroom light off *while* still on call. But he hadn’t spared it a second glance as he walked away from it and got in bed. Things were lightening between them and George felt himself relax into his bed once again. Things were a little awkward but one step closer to *normal*.

He didn’t know how long they had stayed on the call. Half the time they were speaking quietly to each other, and the other half they were just silent and soaking up each other’s company. It was comfortable, to seek comfort in each other was something normal, a relief really. But all too soon Clay had said he had to go, and they were saying their goodbyes.

“Hey George, On a scale-”

At the start of Clay’s familiar question his eyes widened and an idea crashed into him.

*Oh, that’s perfect.*

## Chapter End Notes

So how was it? This was the most fun chapter to write and I’ve been excited for it



since chapter 1! Come scream at me in a comment and if you like the fic feel free to recommend it! I love talking to all of you, brightens my day.

Part 2 is where it gets real juicy so I can't wait to post that~

And it'll be fluff!

Anyway off I go to pass out lol.

# I'll Be Here Waiting: Part Two

## Chapter Notes

Ahhhh finally got this out. This is the second half of chapter 4. I can't believe it was so long.

I hope you guys like this one!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“DREAAAMMM!” George shouted, practically smashing his keyboard. “HELP SAP IS LITERALL- AHHHHHHHH STOP!” He screamed despite the other not being able to hear him, sprinting away from his character.

Unfortunately, in his desperate escape he had run right off a cliff which was *just* his luck. “WHAT THE HELL?!” He shouted, watching as he plummeted to the ground, exploded in items, and the respawn screen popped up.

There was a familiar wheeze traveling through his headphones.

“Dream it’s literally not funny.” He said despite the laughs escaping his own mouth. “Why didn’t you save me?!”

“I was trying!” Clay said breathily through his laughter. “I told you- Haa, I was logging out!”

It was *so* nice to hear Clay’s laugh again, whenever George heard he always had the urge to laugh along with him. His laughter was just infectious, a laugh that was funny in itself. That’s why it always felt like a personal achievement when he got his friend to laugh. Now it felt more like one after the fight had left them too awkward to laugh freely like this. George was beaming so hard his cheeks were starting to hurt.

“Ugghh.” George said, reclining in his chair defeatedly.

“Why are you leaving the stream so *early*?” He asked, he wanted to stay with Clay just a *bit* more. This was the first time they were streaming together since the fight and things were *still* weird, but this brought a sense of normalcy to their routine.

Clay’s laugh gradually died off before he responded, “I told you I have something important to do! You really gonna miss me that much Georgie?” His voice lowered teasingly, sounding like velvet. “Got something you want to tell me?”

George’s fingers stalled in reaching for his keyboard and he thanked all gods above he didn’t have facecam on right now. He knew his face was twisted in pure *discomfort*.

It had been four days since the night of his realization and they were both adjusting to the new dynamic. The air between them was a little off. Mainly because of the giant elephant in the room, George being in love with Clay, which wasn’t new in itself, but now the man himself knew about it too. While George had been more open and honest since that night, they were still skirting around the confession.

George didn't know if he was happy Clay still felt comfortable enough to flirt, or if he *hated* it. What made it worse was that his voice sounded a *little* too close to the Clay in his dream and it twisted something *ugly* in his stomach.

George knew he had taken too long to respond when the chat started to fill with questions about his silence, wondering why he had gone suddenly AFK.

He cleared his throat to regain composure before speaking, "Just make sure to actually be here for the next stream." George tried to tease in order to play it off, but even he knew it fell flat, his voice sounded way too sad and completely contrasted his tone before. That was not the *best* save.

"Shit- I'm sorry." Came the quiet and rushed response from Clay, it had sounded like he spoke without second thought.

George cringed. Clay had broken character there and if the chat comments were bad before now they were *worse*. Anybody could hear how fast Dream's voice went from Dream to Clay. The tone of the stream completely shifted and there was an awkward pause as both of them realized what had just happened.

Little moments like this happened in the calls they had every day, they were relearning each other, avoiding the big L word. They usually moved through stuff like this quickly, and continued on, but this was on stream where things stuck. Viewers were *very* quick to pick up.

*Lol did i miss smth?*

*Are the parents fighting?*

*Guys I think this is serious*

*Hey is everything okay with you two?*

*Lmao this is weird*

The chat kept filling with concerned questions, asking what just happened, and wondering what they were missing. This was a little messy, but probably inevitable.

"It's okay." George cleared his throat, this was not how he imagined this stream going. "You should probably go, don't want you to be late to anything."

There was another awkward pause. He didn't *want* Clay to leave, but he knew the other had to go and honestly, things between them might be a little easier to manage without questions causing trouble for the both of them. Just seeing all the chat made George feel *seconds* away from collapsing into himself. Just when he felt on the brink of a minor breakdown Clay chose to respond.

"Yeah, uh see ya." He trailed off seemingly unsure of his words.

"Yep." George mumbled quietly in reply.

Then Clay disconnected

George watched the chat implode more with questions and comments. Most of them were on how stilted him and Clay had sounded, and a few were trying to placate the others. He really didn't know what to do about it. The last thing he wanted was to alert viewers of what was going on between him and Clay.

He pulled a bit away from the computer, feeling a need to distance himself from the situation. He almost wished Clay hadn't left just so he wouldn't be alone with the viewers. Sometimes he felt like a piece of meat dangled in front of a pack of wolves.

Suddenly Sapnap joined the call.

"Anyone ever told you that you're utter *trash* at minecraft?"

The unexpected comment had laughter bursting out of him once again.

*The fantastic asshole.*

The stream went on for quite a while after that without a hitch. Sapnap joining in for a good amount of time to terrorize George like the absolute menace he was before leaving. It had been great for pushing past the weird incident earlier.

As the stream was winding down George found himself reflecting on what he had been planning. He had come up with something that he *knew* would mean a lot to Clay. It was the perfect thing, he had just been waiting for the perfect time.

At first the plan was to do it just on a call, but that wasn't enough. He could remember the dream vividly, flashing behind his eyelids. The words echoing around the bathroom, his gasping breath, nightmare Clay urging him to tell him who he was. It was time for him to stop being a hypocrite, and what better way to do that than take a risk and let Clay know just how much he cared. He expected Clay to step out of his comfort zone for him, well he was going to do it too.

Although he hadn't wanted to do it the first stream back, but it *had* already been a week since their fight. He mulled it over for a bit, weighing his options.

*Well they had already broken character.* He thought, which seemed to tip the scale in favor of doing it. So he came to a decision, and his shoulders relaxed, relieved with what he decided.

"Okay guys I'm gonna hop off stream, but before I do..." He trailed off anxiety already taking hold of his mind.

He cursed Clay for liking public displays of affection. Why couldn't he have found something more *simple* meaningful, but he supposed it wouldn't be Clay if it weren't for his love for public proclamations. It really was just the others' need to stir the pot, and he rolled his eyes just thinking of it. George was going to be so embarrassed after this but he *knew* this would make Clay fucking explode. So no matter how anxious or embarrassed he got it would be worth it.

He took a slow deep breath and closed his eyes, as he exhaled he opened them. *He was ready.*

"Hey, Clay." He spoke, sure to be close enough to the mic for his words to be loud and clear. "I know you might be still watching and if not I *know* you will later." He said a fond smile sneaking its way on his face.

He glanced at the chat briefly.

*Clay?*

*OMFG HE CALLED HIM CLAY*

*WHAT IS THIS*

*AHhAHahhh omg what's happening*

*Is this a bit?????*

This was way out of his comfort zone but he was in too deep for this man, so he continued.

“I wanted to tell you something, something I’ve avoided saying.” He admitted softly. “There’s something I haven’t answered. I’m sure you know what it is.”

---

*He could remember the first time the other had asked him clear as day.*

*“Okay okay seriously, I am literally falling asleep I gotta go.” George said, eyelids dropping and weighed down by pure exhaustion.*

*“Okay but before you go, I have a question.” Dream said, his voice taking on a flirting lilt, and effectively sucker punching George in the heart. “On a scale of 1-10 how bad do you wish I was there?” he asked.*

*George snapped out of his daze and snorted. “What?”*

*“On a scale of 1-10 how bad do you wish I was there?” He repeated voice smooth and sweet like syrup.*

*Ah he was messing with him again.*

*“Yeah okay, goodnight Dream.” He said before ending the call.*

---

*“I’m going to bounce Georgie.” Dream said, voice thick with exhaustion.*

*“Okay, sweet dreams.” George replied teasingly.*

*“Ha, very funny, but thanks anyway sweetie.” He said sarcastically.*

*George rolled his eyes, “Dream, go to bed.”*

*“Okay fine, but first I have a question.”*

*“Oh god again? Fifth night in a row?” George asked, exasperated.*

*There was a wheeze on the other end of the call, which George knew was because Dream liked his pain. “I said I’d ask until you answered! Now....” He paused. “On a scale of 1-10, how much do you wish lil old me was there Georgie?” He asked again, voice obnoxiously expressive.*

*George didn’t feel bad as he abruptly ended the call, snickering as he imagined the butthurt texts he was about to get.*

---

*One minute he was listening to Dream talk about the latest plugin they were making and the next George felt the hands of exhaustion begin to pull him under the ocean of unconsciousness.*

*For a while he walked the line, teetering between awake and asleep, stuck somewhere in between.*

*He was only lulled in deeper by the other's mellow voice, as he spoke through the tiny phone speakers about something George couldn't make out. Eventually, Dream must've noticed his lack of responsiveness as his voice disappeared and silence floated in the air.*

*"Okay I get it, you're probably tired and want to sleep, but you better call me longer tomorrow." He whined before continuing, voice dropping in a way that sounded nearly inappropriate, "And you know I gotta ask, 1-10 how bad do you wish I was sleeping there right next to you?"*

*George didn't even want to dignify that with a response, the audacity of this man was insane. He couldn't just say shit like that and not expect George to fall head first in love. He instead released a small groan of discontent and allowed himself to lose grip on what was around him and sink deeper.*

*The next thing he knew the hands were dragging him completely under the ocean of unconsciousness.*

*"Night Georgie."*

---

*"Day number 134 of trying to get George to answer one fucking question. Geo-"*

*"Dreaammmmm nooooooooo." He whined, throwing himself back on his bed. "Please just let me go to sleep without harassment."*

*"But Georgeeeee, I'm dying to know! 1-10 how bad do you wish I was there?"*

*"I will block you." George said, voice dead serious.*

*Dream's obnoxious laugh came from his headphones and right into his ears, and George's heart fluttered. What would Clay do if he answered and too much fondness filled his voice? What would happen if he was completely honest? Would he still be laughing? Would he realize it wasn't a joke to George?*

*It would probably ruin their friendship, he thought.*

*"Goodnight Dream." He muttered, hurriedly ending the call before he could fall further in love.*

*It was too late.*

---

*It was their latest call, the night before the stream. They had stayed on for a couple hours chatting about their days. George knew it was late for Clay and he probably should've been asleep, but he stayed on to talk to him.*

*Clay seemed nervous that night, there was a weird energy buzzing from his end of the call, and his voice was a higher pitch than most nights. When George had asked about it, he had just responded that he had something big coming up that was stressing him out. George had done his best to distract him, chatting with him until the other seemed to be drifting off.*

*"Okay, you should probably sleep." He said when Clay had been silent for a while.*

*"Yeah, I will. You know the drill though."*

*George snorted. "Go on get it over with."*

*“1-10-” he said before stopping.*

*George waited a few moments, but the silence remained.*

*This had George on alert, “Claaay?” He asked, voice dragging out the others name.*

*There was something that sounded suspiciously like a sniff. George’s eyes furrowed in confusion. “Are you crying?” He asked disbelief laced in his voice.*

*“No- just dusty.” The other protested immediately, George raised his brow at this, “Seriously, I promise.”*

*George knew better than to push and instead muttered a quick okay.*

*Probably deeming it safe Clay continued, “George, how bad do you wish I was with you tonight?” He asked, quietly.*

*That had been the first time George questioned his decision to wait and answer. Maybe Clay wasn’t crying but something was very off in the way he asked. There was no playfulness in his voice, it sounded fully serious. No flare was added to it, Clay had used the same tone he did when he was trying to win something, when he was focused. Then it occurred to him, Clay had sounded really nervous too, almost like George’s answer held some kind of weight to him.*

*Then he wondered, had it stopped being a joke for Clay too?*

*When had the inside joke changed into something more?*

*He wasn’t reading this wrong, was he?*

*The answer had been just on the tip of his tongue before Clay had hung up. Frustration filled him for a second, but he knew better than to try and chase the moment. Instead, he vowed that it would be the last time he wasn’t answering.*

---

There was a hammering in his heart, body flooding with warmth, and what felt like cotton in his mouth. How many times had Clay asked? How many times had George treated it like a dumb inside joke when it really wasn’t to him? He was near shaking, the nerves he was feeling were all encompassing, but he was determined.

He opened his mouth, speaking clearly and slowly, “My answer?” He spoke softly, imagining Clay was right next to him.

He would probably be confused, and then when it dawned on him Clay’s face would probably twist into a smile that George knew would be cute. His freckles would stretch as the skin did to accommodate his smile, and his eyes would crinkle. George would bet good money that Clay would be the kind of person to smile with his *entire* face. There was no doubt in his head Clay smiling would look absolutely *breathtaking* no matter what his features looked like.

He would probably be pushing for him to hurry up and answer at this point, so George just went for it. He was really warm, his heart felt like it was going to explode, and he couldn’t stop himself from fidgeting with his shirt, but he opened his mouth and spoke,

“It’s a ten Clay,” He confessed. There were thousands of people listening to him right now, but the only one that *mattered* was Clay. “It *always* has been.” He finished, unable to hide the raw

affection seeping in his voice.

When he finally said it he let the moment linger for a while, the rest of the world fading away. The one flaw about this plan was that he couldn't hear Clay's reaction, but he knew it would *mean* something to him. How many nights had he left Clay alone, his question left unanswered in the silence? Now here he was, his confession left out hanging in the silence.

He was scared to check chat, to leave the moment and face the embarrassment of what he had just said in front of thousands. So he remained in it for a while, trying and failing to imagine how Clay would react. Would he laugh? Curse?

Eventually, the heat of the moment began to trickle away, and George focused back on his surroundings once again. The reality was Clay *wasn't* here with him, and he was still on stream. He *barely* glanced at chat to see it practically falling apart at the seams, comments rushing in too fast for his eye to catch.

He was getting flustered rapidly as the idea of what he had just admitted to the stream became a reality.

"Okay, bye." He rushed, ending it before anything else could be said.

Immediately he covered his face, it felt like it was on fire. There was no way that much blood rushing to it was healthy. He felt embarrassed, giddy, and relieved all at once. It made him want to scream all his emotions out but he held back. Instead, he focused on breathing. He took deep breaths, feeling the satisfying feeling of air fully filling his lungs. When he finally felt calm enough he dropped his hands, taking in the sight of his empty room. He still felt *hot*.

With shaky legs; he stood from his chair, abandoning his desk and heading over to his bathroom. A familiar scene came to mind, but he buried it down. Confidently, he pushed aside the door and stepped inside, heading straight for the sink.

George's eyes flicked up to his own reflection in the mirror. His skin was faintly flushed, and his lips curved into a gentle but undeniably *fond* smile. His heart was still hammering away, but it was so light he feared it would float away. *His mask had fallen away.*

He placed his hand over his heart, perhaps to catch it, or maybe just to feel the physical effects love had on him, he wasn't entirely sure.

He was *foolishly* in love with Clay, but even then it ran so much deeper. With each beat he could feel the affection that radiated from his heart for the other. He was in love with him yes, but he also *loved* him. Clay was his best friend, someone who was able to get so close despite being so far, someone able to convey who he was without even showing his face. His happiness was George's own. Never once had he questioned his love for Clay, and never would he.

He had loved Clay before he had ever *fallen* in love with him, and that's what made it so easy. So yes, his feelings were unrequited and it ached like nothing ever before, but he loved him all the same and he would continue to do so.

With his other hand he turned the sink on, the sound of the water rushing from the tap echoing off the walls of his bathroom. Releasing his chest he leaned down to the tap, taking both hands to gently collect the water before splashing it in his face. The cold temperature was a pleasant shock to his still flushed skin, and he found himself repeating this a few times until his face was near equal in temperature to the water.



He uncupped his hands and reached to turn the water *off*, the knob gliding easily in his hands. He let the cold droplets that accumulated on his face fall into the sink. It felt as if he was washing off the remaining attachments he had to the argument, watching as they dripped into the sink, moving steadily down the drain. Once he felt they had fully withdrawn he stood up again, grabbing a towel and pressing it to his face.

Now, he would wait. Clay would message him probably the second he could. George wondered if he would be smug, flustered, or embarrassed. He supposed any would be just as good as long as he was *happy* as well.

He was excited, but he knew he just had to give it *time*.

---

The bed creaked as George rolled over for the umpteenth time. Honestly, he was a little nervous and was finding it hard to find enough peace to sleep. Physically he was in peak comfort. The air was cold around him, and the duvet he had wrapped around him was warm and felt akin to a giant hug. There was no noise other than the soft whir of his ac that filled the background which was typically pleasant enough to lull him to sleep, but tonight it just added to the noise reverberating in his head.

His thoughts were so loud tonight. Mainly it was because Clay hadn't contacted him for at *least* 12 hours at this point. Which for someone as chatty as him was *concerning*. Especially, considering that, #It'sA10Clay had been trending on twitter since his stream had ended, he had expected Clay to have seen it. He just hoped nothing bad had happened, and Clay was just busy.

He rolled over once more and adjusted to feel comfortable, it was late and as time dragged on he became more and more tired. He let his thoughts buzz through his head without resistance, letting them cycle in and out of his mind. Eventually they grew a little quieter and his breathing began to even out. The waves of unconsciousness were crashing against his face, gradually getting higher, closer to fully consuming him and pulling him in.

Right as they were about to take him, a ringing filled the air and the waves rapidly receded. He groaned as his eyes snapped open, seeing that the room was now illuminated by the glow of his phone screen. He turned to face the bedside table it was on and glared. He watched as it rang, vibrating against the surface and piercing through the air. He debated not answering it, but decided to at least see who it was. He begrudgingly reached out to grab it. He was going to *kill* whoever was calling this late.

When he saw the screen though all his grumpiness dissipated, and any tendrils of sleep that held on to him were abandoned.

*Clay.*

He answered bringing it up to his ear. "Clay?" He said, voice deep from near sleep.

"You answered." He stated, between heavy breaths.

George felt his brows furrow, and he sat up, willing himself to be more alert.

"What's going on... You sound winded?" He paused. "Have you been *running*?" He asked incredulously.

"I saw the stream- What you said." He responded breathily, bulldozing over George's questions, and only raising more. There was the sound of a car passing from Clay's end that drowned out

whatever he was saying.

“Are you outside or something? There’s like ca--”

“You *really* meant it.” He said voice cracking with emotion and once again ignoring questions. The way he had said that had George’s heart in his throat. It was full of wonder, shock, and something terribly fond.

“Yes. Of course.” He responded after only a beat.

There was a sweet breathless chuckle, and then an intake of breath.

Was this a post work out call or was Clay dying? George wondered.

He opened his mouth to ask what was happening but Clay interrupted before he could, “I’m *really* happy George. Hearing yo-” He cut himself off. “It was a ten for me too.”

The breath caught in George’s throat. What was that supposed to mean?

“No actually, an eleven. It’s always been- It *has* been for a while,” Clay’s voice was gentle and low as he admitted that. It was a tone that George recognized from himself. “I’ve wanted to *be with you* for what felt like forever.”

“Clay, that sounds like-” He swallowed. “Sorry I may be projecting but that sounds like a-”

“Remember how you said to give you a few days?” Clay interrupted again.

“Yes.” George responded a bit doubtful, this conversation was making his mind jump through hoops and he couldn’t figure out where it was going.

“Are you ready yet, do you need more time?” Clay asked.

George hesitated briefly. Did he?

He knew what this conversation led to, *rejection*. It would be hard, but unlike before he knew that they would still be friends. Clay loved him, not in the way he quite wanted but undeniably so. He was okay with his feelings being unrequited, he was ready for things to change.

He knew it was time and he braced himself before responding. “No, I’m ready.”

“Okay, well I’m ready to show you my face.” Any semblance of calm George had gained before from his pep talk flew out the window. His heart quickened and his cheeks warmed. He gripped onto the phone tighter, anticipation causing him to tense.

“I think we should do this all at once.” Clay stated, once again blowing George away.

So that’s where this was going, *a video call*. He was going to get rejected, but felt a bit better knowing he would *finally* see Clay. Finally know why the other had hidden from him for so long. He could hardly keep still and found his foot tapping the ground without will. This was a lot to take in, he was nearly nauseous with excitement.

He was drawn out of his shock when Clay spoke again, “Will you let me? Please.”

He blinked in surprise at the pleading in the others’ voice, his heart would *not* stop pounding. Clay really never let him catch his breath.

“Wow okay.” He said, confused. “Yeah we can do that.”

“You’re *absolutely* sure George?”

George almost felt like laughing at this point. Why was he acting like it was such a big deal? *Well it was*, but he was being weirdly insistent on getting George’s permission. He was practically bursting with anticipation and excitement, if Clay was going to drag this on with any more questions he was *sure* he’d explode from frustration.

“Clay.” He said a little exasperated. “I am.”

“Okay, that’s really good.”

He sighed in relief. Thank god, *if he had to wait any longer...*

George slightly pulled the phone from his cheek, he wanted to be ready to look at it when it switched to a video call.

“Yeah?” He inquired mindlessly.

Clay sounded incredibly nervous, but really that was to be expected. There was a tremble in his voice, and it was a higher pitch, it even sounded like his voice was *shaking* at points.

“Yep,” Clay popped the P, and George snorted.

“Must be pretty good then.” He said unthinkingly, still a bit distracted by his nerves working up his thoughts.

“Yeah.” Clay replied, quite fast. His voice was *really* shaking. “Really, *really* good because I’m standing *outside* your apartment *right now*. ”

*Outside? He- what?*

George felt that feeling that he only got when the roller coaster he was on plummeted to the ground. All the anticipation and waiting disappearing in millisecond, replaced by a feeling perfectly embodied by the phrase “Oh shit.” His stomach was doing flips and he might puke.

A nervous laugh stuttered out of George, or maybe it was more of an insane giggle. His fidgeting had halted at this point. Had he heard Clay right or was this some weird dream?

His heart raced a mile a second as he asked, “*What?*”

He had only been joking about Clay never letting him catch his breath, but he *really* couldn’t breathe. His heart was pounding so hard it hurt, and his lungs just weren’t expanding to take in air.

His world really had stopped.

“You’re kidding, Clay” He could only whisper, due to his acute lack of oxygen.

“George step outside your apartment. I am *not* fucking kidding.”

There was no part of Clay’s voice that revealed a joke, he sounded completely serious and George *definitely* wasn’t going to breathe now.

“Cla-”

*There was no way.*

"Please, I can't wait to see you any longer. I need—" He sounded on the verge of tears, desperate, just choked up with raw and *visceral* emotion. "*Please George*, I've been waiting for so *long*."

George was already stumbling out of bed and halfway to the front door as he listened to Clay talk. He had been on his feet and rushing to the door the *second* he heard Clay's voice break on the first '*please*'.

His heart was hammering in his throat and blood was rushing in his ears. The feeling was so near terror, but it was completely different. He couldn't breathe, he felt weak, he was shaking, and his endocrine system was positively flooding him with adrenaline. But he felt on the verge of one of the *happiest* moments of his life.

He was definitely shaking as he opened the door, not because he hadn't grabbed a jacket or even shoes, but because he was about to collapse in on himself like a star. He was about to *supernova*. He stepped out into the cold, phone still to his ear. His lungs were burning at this point, but it barely registered in his brain.

He stood outside and looked around in the dark. He didn't see anything so he took a few steps out toward the street.

He pushed himself to speak, "Clay wher—"

"George," he broke. "Turn to your left." Clay said, sounding out of breath himself.

The sound echoed and confused his brain. *Why-?*

Then realization smashed into him, and he for sure knew he was going to collapse.

He was hearing it through his phone and *in person*.

His heart had stopped.

That's why it had sounded weird. Clay's voice sounded in his right ear from his phone, but a much clearer version had sounded from his left *too*. This was not a joke, and George's hair all stood on edge, there was a *chill* running through his body.

Ever so slowly he turned to his left, and every emotion that had built up, everything he had felt the past few days, all the affection he felt for this man, they all collided. George was helpless as the gasp left his mouth and the entire universe seemed to screech to a stop. His body was overwhelmed, his mind was overwhelmed, his *everything* was overwhelmed, and he was sure he had short circuited. Maybe even died.

His phone slipped right from his fingers as he lost all motor function, and plummeted to the floor colliding roughly with the concrete. He had gone supernova.

"Clay?" *He gasped.*

## Chapter End Notes

Lmaooo there were so many people waiting for them both to fly out, and I wish I had

thought of that before planning this lol. Super cute idea, and potentially a good oneshot fic? Anyway, I hope you guys liked this chapter. Come scream at me in the comments, it encourages me to write! I also just love to chat :D

It fuels me.

Also hehehe, I know I ended this one a little evil >:D

Anyway, see you next chapter!

# I Just Need...

## Chapter Notes

TRIGGER WARNING: BLOOD, UNHEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS, PANIC ATTACKS!!!!!!

This chapter has heavy topics and I don't recommend reading if any of these bother you. If you do tread lightly. It's nothing too graphic, but if just the MENTION of these things triggers you DON'T READ.

Finally! This dumb chapter is out lmao. I dedicate this to everyone who listened as I complained about not being able to complete it. I hope you enjoy <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### *7 days*

Clay stared holes into his computer monitor. He'd bought a one way ticket to see George the other day, he had done it without much thought. He didn't know how long he would stay, but he knew that he wasn't going to show up at the other's apartment when he *wasn't* ready. George had said to give him a couple days so Clay had booked a ticket for a couple days out. If he arrived and George still wasn't feeling ready *well*, he was just going to be camping in a hotel for a while.

The severity hadn't hit him until the day after he bought it, *today* to be precise. He had sat down at his computer, and the next thing he knew he had pulled up the digital receipt.

He had been staring at it for maybe half an hour.

*What had he been thinking?* He had just *fully* committed to showing George his face, *in person*.

The longer he stared at the receipt the tighter his chest felt. George was going to see his face, it was going to be within *days*. The thought made him feel something indescribable. His eyes remained locked on the screen.

He was digging his hands in his lower thighs, practically clawing at them. He hadn't noticed until it had become painful, his nails were shielded by the thick cloth of his sweatpants, but there was a dull pain that felt like a strong pinch.

Abruptly he stood, ripping his eyes away from the screen and walking away.

Later when he took a shower he found he could see faint red marks from where his fingers dug into his own skin.

### *5 days*

He missed George, he wanted to see him. He did. But he didn't want George to see *him*. He had woken up in the morning with a creeping sense of anxiety and a tight feeling still in his chest. He felt like he was being slowly crushed. He had an itching feeling all under his skin, a thrumming

just under it. Something he hadn't felt in a *while*.

As he got ready for the day he felt it building, it was compounding. He felt full of a *sick* kind of energy, it was electric, hot, *burning*. It was the distinct feeling of anxiety that burned with *self hatred*. His hands shook throughout the day, jaw clenched, and tension only growing. He was a hot wire building in electricity with no outlet to release it into.

He hadn't felt this bad in *months*.

So he did the one thing he knew would help, and went to the gym.

He was in the locker room, shutting his bag into the same locker he always used and making sure to shut it properly. He sat on the bench facing the lockers, setting his water bottle next to his feet. He unraveled what was in his other hand, it was two long black pieces of cloth, neon green stitching spelt out the brand name.

He hadn't done this in a while but without thought his hands were moving, he began to wrap the cloth around his hand, using the technique that had always supported his hand most. Once he finished wrapping the first, he had moved to the next, being sure to match the snugness of the first one. He had to unwind it and rewrap at one point, just to make sure it fit better.

He made a point of leaving his boxing gloves at home today, only taking his wraps with him. He needed to be more personal with the bag today, which he *knew* was dumb. If he wasn't careful he would damage his hands *again*, but looking down at them, a finger or two crooked, scars lining his knuckles, especially his right hand, he didn't think they could get much *uglier*.

Once he was done he grabbed his water bottle and got up, leaving the locker room and heading straight to the punching bag. As his eyes locked onto the bag he felt a smirk come across his face. Nobody was using it, *perfect*. The need for a release was painful at this point, his skin had been burning all day, he had to move, to release the buzzing tension in his muscles otherwise he was going to *explode*.

Unlike usual he skipped his warm up and got straight into his stance.

He hopped around a bit, circling the bag and loosening up, getting back into the flow of things. Then he threw his first punch.

Right as he hit the bag and a smack filled the air he was quickly pulling back, other hand up and shielding his face. The bag was heavier than he remembered and the next few punches he used more strength, feeling satisfied as the impact moved it more.

It felt good. *Really* good.

He threw himself into it, packing all his energy behind every punch, pushing himself further every time his hand came back from colliding with the bag. Shortly he was heaving breaths, but he kept on going. There was a pleasant burn in his lungs, and his hands stung. He was dancing around the bag, trying to focus on his footwork as well as quickening his punches.

It felt good to be back with the bag again. He hadn't done so in a while, he'd been busy keeping up with everything, and he *had* gotten past his main use for it. But as self hatred burned in him hotter than a coal once again, he had to return.

It had been his old therapist who had suggested boxing for him. He used to run a bit, never took it too seriously. At least not until he began to *hate* himself. He thought back to it, punches becoming more forceful.

At first he only hid his face for anonymity, his own safety. He had never felt particularly insecure about himself or his face, he had never paid much attention to his looks at *all*. But then he got big, millions of fans, and suddenly so much attention was on him, so many eyes.

He had always been a bit of a perfectionist, it just stemmed from his competitive nature. He had gotten harder on himself the more attention he received because now there was so much *pressure*. Pressure to be funny, maintain a following, to be on the top of his game all the time.

Willingly or not his fans placed him on a pedestal, and now they were all watching, admiring. Clay was scared for the day he would fall off, he just had all the more eyes to watch him fail, rip into his every move, nothing was *simple* anymore. He was treated like some sort of god who couldn't possibly mess up, and it only amplified the bigger he got. Soon he found himself getting harder and harder on himself, because he had so much more to *lose* now.

Then there was the fact that not showing his face had become part of his identity. Fans speculated what he looked like, placing expectations. They had set a *precedent* for what he looked like, and once again he was at the top of the pedestal. But he was a *human* being, *nobody* could meet those expectations. With all the attention turned towards his looks *he* became more aware of them. It had all happened so fast, *too* fast.

It had *invaded* his life, it was not just his skills that he was more critical of, it was every aspect of him. His looks, his laugh, his personality. He wasn't just placing his own expectations on himself anymore, now it was his fans expectations, his haters expectations, his friends expectations. He had *spiraled*. He was so critical of himself he began to *hate* himself. He hated himself for being unable to be who they all expected him to be. He could never be enough. So he found himself staring in the mirror, angry, because *Clay* was not *Dream*. He *never* could be.

He was in too deep now and showing his face after how long it had been anticipated, it would be a huge thing. He would be letting so many people down. He would stare into the mirror, look at every part of himself, picking out all the flaws. What would they think? He thought. What would they say?

It all bubbled up in him, self hatred accumulating and poisoning him from the inside out. So he started to run. It took his mind off everything, he felt free, like he was running from his problems. All he could think about when he ran was the burning in his lungs and the path ahead. He poured all of his energy in it, until he was exhausted and all the self hatred had simmered down.

Then one day he twisted his ankle pushing himself too far, and *everything* fell apart.

His punching grew harder now, feeling his breathing quicken as he remembered what had happened.

It had been *only* a week since being unable to run, he felt shitty about it and it only increased his hatred. Then he had completely failed at a speedrun and only spiraled further. He practically tore himself apart over it, ripping into his skills, and then it was his looks, what would they say if they *saw* you like *this*? He thought.

It had been late, bubbling up, he felt jittery, the need to run, do something with all the energy and hatred he felt. He remembers it clear as day, he was in the bathroom staring in the mirror being over analytical of himself. He didn't want to look like *this*. He wished he could change it. He was a *failure*.

His mind was racing and he only got angrier with himself. He was breathing heavily, his lips had curled into a snarl and he was crying. *Pathetic*. What would everyone say if they saw him like this?



All he could think was how fucking *disgusting* he looked. He saw red, and all the built up hatred he had exploded.

The mirror shattered as his fist connected with the surface, pieces of it flying outward, cutting the shit out of his hand. His image fractured as his fist collided with the reflection of his face, he wanted it *gone*.

Pain had erupted in his right hand almost immediately, his knuckles tore open and bled, and a much *deeper* pain radiated through it. For a second it felt *good*, the pain distracted him and he felt all his emotions fade away. It had *worked*.

Then he realized what he had just done.

His blood was dripping down into the sink and staining the white porcelain. He stared at it, heart thundering. A few small shards of the mirror shined up at him, and he caught his own reflection stare back at him, he was *broken*. Unable to withstand their stares, he turned on the tap and watched them wash down the drain.

He cried silently as he realized he hadn't been running from self hatred, he had just been *chasing* physical pain. Hoping for some sick distraction or release. He just wanted to feel something other than self hatred, but now all he felt was *shame*.

He paused in his punching for a second, taking a much needed few breaths. He was shaking a bit and he couldn't tell if it was from physical exertion or emotional exertion. Once he caught his breath, he returned to his workout just as fierce as before.

He had gone to the doctor the next day after the pain worsened and his hand had swollen, the cuts were deep and wouldn't stop bleeding. They told him he had *broken* the bone at the base of his pinkie, they called it a boxers fracture. They said he was lucky the break itself was rather mild, he only had to wear a splint for three weeks, and they had to stitch up a cut he had gotten on his hand. He had *wrecked* it.

It meant *three* weeks of being unable to play. He had fucked up the *one* thing he had, and he had never felt worse in his life. He hit *rock bottom*.

So he claimed he was on vacation and scheduled a therapy appointment *immediately*.

It took him months full of sessions to manage everything better, but even then the one thing he couldn't fully get over was showing his face. He had changed though, channeling his energy into healthier outlets. He started boxing, wrapping his hands properly and wearing gloves. He wasn't harming himself and he was able to get out some of his pent up feelings.

He began to feel better about his appearance, not being as critical. He had left his mirror shattered for *months*, until he felt okay enough about his appearance to get it fixed. He had improved leagues, he didn't hate the way he looked anymore, but he still didn't want to do a face reveal. But it was fine, he didn't ever need to reveal it, *except to George*.

His best friend, the one he absolutely *adored*, the one person who's opinion mattered most. He wasn't ever going to risk changing their relationship. The closer they got the harder it was to entertain the idea of showing him. He couldn't change, no, *wouldn't* change their relationship. He could never be good enough for George, could never meet the others expectations. Even then he didn't want to complicate their dynamic, the rhythm they had fallen into. Sometimes it felt like George was one of his lifelines. It felt safer to keep himself hidden, and leave whatever they had unbothered.

And then he got *more* therapy, something he didn't even tell George. He had been so close and ready to show George, and then he fucking fell in love and it changed *everything*. Now he really couldn't lose him. Nobody made Clay feel as loved as he did with George, he was the one person Clay *couldn't* lose.

But here he was now, going to show George in just a few days. It felt so real, dragging in all his past struggles. But he *should* be fine, he had been out of therapy for a while. Things were *good*. But here he was, feeling all his insecurities resurface.

His wrap had come loose on his right hand, he hadn't noticed as he was too caught up in his own thoughts. He had gotten way more aggressive without noticing, utilizing all his strength in his punches. His first *hurt*, it was throbbing. He *knew* he should stop, this was a recipe for disaster, but he decided to throw *one* last punch.

Then his bare knuckles collided with the rough skin of the bag, the punch he had thrown was *full* force. The skin on his knuckles shredded, and to his horror a *familiar* deep pain erupted at the base of his pinkie.

"Fuck!" He shouted, yanking his fist back and cradling it with his other hand. It was shaking, the same hand he had gotten the fracture on in the first place.

His heart sunk. *Of course...*

When George called him that night, crying and apologizing, Clay knew he really couldn't slip back into old habits. After he left that call he scheduled an appointment with his old therapist.

#### ***4 Days***

"I'm scared I've regressed." He admitted pushing himself further into the couch.

"It's normal to fall back into old mindsets when a trigger comes up, but you've come a long way. It may feel like you're back to them, but you're not. You said it wasn't intentional, and you stopped didn't you?" His therapist asked, gesturing her hand to Clay's own. He had wrapped his knuckles after going to the doctor. He hadn't fractured it again but he had gotten *close*.

He just nodded.

"And it's perfectly normal to have to schedule a one time appointment if things come up. Sometimes I don't see patients for years, and something comes up and they've scheduled another appointment with me. Doesn't mean they're back to how they used to be, just something popped up and they need support." She explained gently, smiling pleasantly at Clay.

Tension seeped from his shoulders and he relaxed. *She was right*. This was just an obstacle he needed a little help to overcome. "Makes sense." He replied.

"Great, now let's work through some stuff to prepare you for showing George, and review some tools you can use when your anxiety pops up again, sound good?"

He only nodded.

#### ***3 Days***

**Sapnappy&Dream:**

**Dream:** Hey idiot, think we can call after you finish class.

**Sapnappy:** Ig ( ͡\_ ͡)

**Sapnappy:** Jk

**Sapnappy:** what's up? Give me a rundown so I know what to expect lol.

Clay sent a picture of his hand.

**Sapnappy:** Holy shit dude wtf happened?

**Sapnappy:** Is that the same hand that you busted when you were a kid?!

**Dream:** Actually, I lied about that.

**Dream:** Haven't told anyone about this and you seemed like the best person to talk too first.

**Sapnappy:** :(

**Sapnappy:** This isn't a good story is it?

**Dream:** No. Sorry, not this time.

**Sapnappy:** Well I'm glad you decided to tell me. I'll clear out a few hours for you man, after you tell me we can do smth to cheer you up?

**Dream:** Thanks, love you man <3

**Sapnappy:** ILY2 <3

***15 hours and 40 minutes***

*Today was the day.*

He was finally at the airport. He sat slouched in the uncomfortable plastic chair, bouncing his knee up and down. He was on the verge of a panic attack, but he was managing it well. He was focusing on his breathing, and avoiding thinking about the fact that the minute he got on that plane he would *officially* be on his way to seeing George.

He had thrown up in the morning.

Clay had realized it was the day and excitement, anxiety, and literally every other emotion overwhelmed him the second he woke up. His anxiety had just been building since, but the stream he had joined for a bit with George made him feel a little better.

Well *until* he had made it awkward.

He drummed his fingers against his leg. This was not the *best* feeling.

## *15 hours and 25 minutes*

“Pick up, pick up, pick up.” He pleaded, gripping onto the phone tightly.

Clay stood, slouched against the grimy stall door, trying and failing to count out his breaths. His heart was beating out of his chest as he waited for the phone to be answered.

It had been fine. It had been *fine*. He was sitting there handling it just fine. He had been just on the edge of a panic attack but he kept himself from falling, but the thoughts filled his head again. He was scared. He didn’t know if he had made the right decision anymore. He wasn’t going to be able to do it.

And then he reached into his pocket, a little too harsh. The scabs on his knuckles caught on the scratchy denim and when he pulled his hand away in pain, they had ripped off. He stared at his hand blankly, pinpricks of blood beginning to dot at the reopened wounds, his face fell and bile rose in this throat.

Then he spiraled.

And that’s how he ended up here, in a gross ass airport bathroom, hyperventilating and bleeding on the floor.

The phone answered and Clay nearly cried in relief.

“Hey dude, what’s going on-”

“Nick, I can’t fucking do this.” Clay cut him off, words rushed out through panicked breaths.

“Dude-” Nick said, seeming to regain his bearings. “You’re at the airport what do you mean?” He questioned.

“He was right.” Clay stated, running a hand through his hair. “I was just fucking *scared*. I’m just some scared *idiot*.” His breathing quickened. “I *can’t* do this.”

There was a pause on the line as the other processed what he said, before breaking the silence. “He may have been right about you being scared, but that doesn’t mean you *can’t* do this.”

He really couldn’t. He had locked himself in a *fucking* bathroom stall, pressed up against the wall to prevent himself from falling. This was not the image of someone who *could* do it.

His head thunked back against the wall as he tipped it back, staring at the LED on the ceiling. It glared back at him, bright and cold, exposing his pathetic state.

“He was right.” Clay repeated voice rough, head stuck on the idea.

“So?” Nick asked, sounding exasperated.

George had been right, he was scared. He was way too scared to show him, way too insecure. The realization felt like a sharp rock sicking in his stomach, scratching up his throat on the way down. He hadn’t wanted George to be right, he wanted to prove him wrong. Show that he could trust their relationship, but he just couldn’t lose him. Couldn’t face the idea of *rejection*.

His mind found itself wandering back to the fight, to all the things that had been said. As he ran through what had been said his thoughts halted, realizing something he spoke.

“He didn’t know *why* I was scared. He was *thinking* we weren’t as close as he thought.”

It made sense, why had he never thought of it before? George was upset not only because Dream had withheld this from him for so long, but also because of the clear lack of trust. The other had assumed it was because Clay didn't think they were good enough friends. *Ouch*. His heart clenched at the idea of George thinking that.

He could see how that would hurt.

"So technically he wasn't right." Nick said, interrupting his thoughts.

Clay paused, mulling it over before responding, "No, no he wasn't."

*He wasn't right.*

How did having that knowledge help him though, and why was he so stuck on it? It didn't change that George had been *right* about him being scared.

"But does it matter?" He questioned, in tune with his own thoughts on it.

"Does it matter to you?" Nick responded.

The question hung in the air.

*Did it?*

Why was he so hung up on George being right? If he was *so* what? It only meant that their whole friendship was falling apart right at the seams.

He laughed wetly, feeling tears prick in his eyes at the idea of losing George. There was no fucking way, he *had* to do this. But standing there, on the verge of taking the plunge into vulnerability he found himself faltering. Staring over the edge and trembling, he knew he had to take the jump. He had *wanted* to, until he was staring down at it.

"I'm not ready." He admitted. *George was right.*

There was a huff of annoyance over the line. "Will you *ever* be?" Nick sounded annoyed, fed up with the cyclical thoughts Clay had.

"He's *not* right about everything, you're not right about *everything*. Do you really think it'll change things? I know it's scary dude, but have some faith in the unknown."

Clay wheezed, it sounded painful as it escaped his mouth. Nick did *not* just tell him to trust the unknown, the *idea* of it was hilarious. He wanted to laugh at the audacity of it, Clay's anxiety made sure he never just blindly trusted, so he did laugh.

He had half the mind think about how he probably looked *and* sounded insane. Clay wasn't getting enough air in from the panic attack or manic laughter, so he was taking gasping breaths in between, phone clutched in his hand, and eyes frantically scanning the ceiling in hopes of avoiding the *annoying* ass light.

The fucking light was piercing into him, burning him alive. Why the *fuck* did a bathroom have to be so fucking lit up?

"I can't." He croaked out.

"Then what's the point?" Nick pushed, sounding determined "Why did you book the flight in the first place? You wouldn't have booked if you didn't have *any*."

Nick had a point. He *wanted* to do this, he bought the tickets to do this, he met with his therapist to do this, he drove to the airport today to *do* this. But he didn't want to fail to meet George's expectations. He didn't want to be not *enough*. He could handle disappointment with anyone but George. After George had hung up his phone the night of the fight, Clay had felt like he had lost him. He had never felt so upset, so frantic. Clay vowed *never* to feel like that again, never to lose George again. Risking disappointing him felt like losing him all over again. What if George didn't like his face, couldn't love the way he looked, and then his love for Clay disappeared.

He couldn't handle that.

"I can't do this if I'm not *sure*." His voice broke, he had slouched further down the wall, now staring at his shoes.

"You keep going in circles!" Nick said firmly, voice cutting through Clays thoughts. "Will you *ever* be sure?" He asked harshly, tone unforgiving. Clay felt himself slip further down the wall until his butt met the floor, sitting with his feet planted out in front of him.

He knew Nick must've heard how erratic his breathing had gotten, but the other pushed on, unrelenting.

"Was *he* sure when he confessed to you? He said he *loves* you, did you just fucking forget about that?!" He asked frustrated.

Clay opened his mouth, brain to mouth filter no longer present, "It could mean nothing!"

"Do you really believe that?!" Nick shot back, "You talk *every* day, you're *best* friends, you *both* do so much shit for each other it's gross. How much more proof do you need Clay?!" The question shook him to his core.

"If *that's* not enough, it won't *ever* be enough." Nick finished.

*Will it ever be enough?*

*Has it ever been enough?*

*Why couldn't it be enough?*

He didn't know, or he did.

The problem was himself. He didn't *feel* enough. Logically it was enough, it was *more* than enough. He knew George loved him, he knew that he was his best friend, he knew that George would never leave him over something as petty as looks. His mind flooded with thoughts and he felt himself groan.

*He just needed someth-*

"Oh shit-" He heard Nick say, and the tone of voice had him on alert.

"What?" He found himself asking immediately, sitting up and heart pounding hard in his chest.

"I'm watching George's stream right now." There was a pause that had Clay on edge. "I think you should hop on real fast."

His heart plummeted and he ripped the phone away from his ear, fingers trembling as he tried to get on twitch. He clicked on George's stream, turning his phone horizontal and holding it tight. It

took a while to load, but when it did Clay felt his breath stutter. The chat was spamming his name, *Clay*.

*What was going on?*

He couldn't see George's face but his character was frozen, unmoving like Clay's lungs.

"I wanted to tell you something, something I've avoided saying." Came George's voice from his tiny speakers. "There's something I haven't answered. I'm sure you know what it is." he said softly.

Clay's mind reeled, his heart in his throat.

*What the fuck was he doing?*

He stared, captivated at the phone and waiting for George's voice to break the silence again.

"My answer?" There was another pause that drove Clay insane.

His mind was racing.

*Answer? Answer for what?*

George was talking to him, directing this at him. It almost sounded like they were in a call, George speaking softly and intimately to him, and only him over the line. And then it occurred to him. The puzzle pieces clicking into place.

*There was no fucking way.* He thought, staring at the screen wide eyed, but George proved him wrong.

"It's a ten Clay." He said, voice carrying a certain fondness.

Clay's heart exploded at the words. His mouth fell open, he raised a shaky hand to it, the words were seared into his head.

*No fucking way.*

"It *always* has been." George said, like a response to Clay's pure disbelief.

His words hung in the air of the bathroom, and Clay stared dumbfounded at his phone. The emotional whiplash from moving from his previous anxiety, to hearing George admit that, left him speechless.

He hadn't blinked, instead staring at the phone for answers, and then all too soon George rushed out a goodbye, ending the stream. George's character no longer filled the screen, but Clay remained in his spot, stuck staring down at the screen. His head was looping the moment over and over, he was in *shock*.

"Uh, I feel like I'm missing something..." Nick trailed off.

Clay startled, having forgotten he was still on the phone with him, still sitting on the disgusting bathroom floor mid panic attack.

This was *real*. This was *happening*.

George had really just admitted that in front of *thousands* of people. He *hated* expressing himself

verbally. But he had just admitted something so personal, leaving himself out in the open, *exposed*. And he had done it all for Clay.

“Holy *shit*,” He breathed out, dropping the phone in his hand and looking up at the light.

It still stared back, but it seemed less bright this time, less *aggressive*. It didn’t attack his eyes and it was *almost* inviting as it bathed the area around him softly. He looked down at himself and at everything around him, in what seemed like a whole new light.

He choked out a laugh, much lighter than the ones before. “Holy *fucking* shit.”

“Dude what the fuck?” Nick questioned again, but it fell on deaf ears.

It was a *ten*.

George wanted him there right *now*. He had *always* wanted him there. He wanted *Clay* there.

He reached out to his phone and picked it up, eyes falling to his bloody hand as he did. It had begun to dry and flake, pain long gone and instead a dull ache.

“I gotta go.” He said simply.

“Clay- wait what? *Dude* ! I did not just live through whatever the hell that was just for you to run aw-”

“*No* .” He cut off. “I’ve got a *plane* to catch.” He said voices steady, his breathing had calmed sometime while he had been listening to George speak.

“Oh...” There was a brief pause as he seemed to process. “Oh fuck *yeah* dude!”

The excitement in the other's voice stirred something light in Clay’s chest. “Okay uh dude thanks for this but I gott-”

“Just go man!”

Not needing to be told twice he ended the call, picking himself off the floor, grimacing every time he came in contact with a surface. He looked down at himself after he stood, smoothing over some of the wrinkles in his clothes. Once he deemed himself presentable enough, he flushed the toilet. Just in case anyone was in there with him, though he doubted they hadn’t heard his panic attack.

He tried not to think about it.

He pushed open the doors, glad to see nobody at the sinks. Quickly he hurried over, choosing the one closest to the wall and turning it on. The water rushed out, and he stuck one of his hands in to test the temperature. He adjusted the knob to be a little colder, before becoming satisfied with it.

He got some soap before with his other hand before plunging it under the water. He breathed a sigh of relief at the cleansing feeling.

He began to scrub, watching the dried blood rehydrate and travel down the drain.

He was *going* to get on that plane and tell George how he felt. He *wanted* to.

There was never going to be a better time for it, he may not feel sure, anxiety still scratching at his composure, but part of him *knew* George wanted him there.



### ***3 hours and 32 minutes***

He stepped off the flight, relieved to be out of the sky and back on the ground. Heights did *not* agree with him. As he entered the airport he checked the time, grimacing at how late it was.

Now he had to find his bags and head to the hotel he booked, and then call George, but he was tired. He considered doing it another day, but then he remembered.

“It’s a ten Clay.”

He groaned, heat sparking to life in his face. He *really* wanted to see him. He pushed forward, heading to grab his bags.

### ***3 hours and 15 minutes***

He was going to rip his hair out or scream, maybe both. He could not for the *life* of him find his suitcase and he was starting to worry. He kept checking the time, at this rate he would get the hotel, call, and George would be asleep. He ran a hand down his face, sighing.

*This was rough.*

### ***3 hours and 2 minutes***

He had to talk to someone in the airport for help. Apparently they were having some issues wi-

It really *didn’t* fucking matter. He just wanted his bag so he could *leave* . George was so fucking close. They were closer than they had ever been in his life, and he was stuck in an airport when he could be seeing George in person. He was so frustrated he was losing it, but then he started to think of *George*.

He felt himself smile despite the situation, he was finally going to see George up close. Be able to hug him-

He needed to stop thinking about it because now people were giving him *looks* , it really wasn’t his fault that he was excited. He couldn’t stop the dopey ass smile from spreading across his face.

### ***2 hours and 45 minutes***

He was seconds away from just leaving to run off and see George. He was practically vibrating with excitement, anxiety, and anticipation. The smile had not left his face, and it had only grown bigger. He couldn’t stop thinking about George. George who he was about to meet, George who he could *finally* hug, George who he might get to kiss.

His smile was *really* starting to hurt now, and he felt a giggle- *a giggle* leave his lips.

This was *not* good.

## ***2 hours and 15 minutes***

He had finally gotten his bag, and the second his hands were on it he was off. Hauling ass across the entire airport like a *maniac*. He was getting a cab and heading *straight* to check into his hotel. Which he had specifically gotten close to George's apartment, and then he would call George and ask if he could see him.

## ***1 hour and 30 minutes***

He was at the hotel, *well* hotel lobby to be exact They had booked his room wrong. There had been some mess up with the system and they had to make some arrangements since they didn't have a room ready an-

It really didn't *matter*.

George was twenty minutes away. *Twenty*.

He was definitely asleep by now, but he was *here* and Clay was losing his shit. He sat in the Cab thinking about it, how *close* they were. He had been fidgeting the whole ride, a grin still splitting across his face.

It was then he decided he couldn't wait *any* longer, his anxiety had been building again as he waited and he did *not* want to back out of this. There was also the fact that he was way too excited, he hadn't felt calm in *hours*.

So he interrupted the man at the desk who was apologizing for the mishap. "Can you just hold onto my stuff for me." He rushed out, impatience reaching a new high.

"Pardon?" The man asked, confusion shown on his face.

"I've got somewhere to be, but can you just keep my bag at the desk or something. You said the room will be cleaned in an hour? I can be back by then." Clay said, speaking too fast to come off as sane.

"Wait, you want to leave-"

He was shaking imagining seeing George *now* and suddenly this conversation was unimportant, so he interrupted.

"Actually it's cool, I'll just check in tomorrow and take it with me." He turned, hauling his suitcase behind him. "Thanks!" He called from over his shoulder as he left the building.

## ***1 hour and 12 minutes***

He stared blankly at the cab driver, mouth having fallen open "Aw *shit*, I don't know his *exact* address." He wanted to *scream*.

## ***1 hour and 1 minute***

“You’re *sure* that’s his address?” He asked again, biting his lip.

“Oh my *god* dude, yes!” Nick yelled, clearly annoyed. “Jesus *christ* save *this man*.” He muttered.

### ***30 minutes***

“So, you meeting someone special?” The cab driver asked, breaking the silence in the car.

“Yep” Clay replied, nearly too excited to hold a proper conversation. “First time meeting actually. I’m nervous.”

“I can tell.” The driver responded, pointedly looked at Clay’s bouncing leg through the mirror.

Clay paid the shade no mind as he responded, “Yeah he hasn’t even seen my *face* before yet.”

The car swerved a little.

### ***12 minutes***

He stood staring at the old apartment building door, it was a nice gray color, quite a normal door actually. But it wasn’t just *any* door, it was *George’s* door. He stood on the sidewalk near the road, the street lamp to his right lit up everything just enough to chase away the shadows.

*This was it.*

He pressed call.

### ***1 minute***

“George step outside your apartment. I am not fucking kidding.” He said dead fucking serious.

There was a pause on the other end before George replied,

“Cla-”

“Please.” Clay interrupted, voice shaking. George was right on the other side of the walls he was looking at, “I can’t wait to see you any longer. I need-” He was on the verge of tears, desperate, choked up with raw and visceral emotion.

“Please George, I’ve been waiting for so long.” He admitted, he just wanted the door to fucking *open* already.

### ***30 seconds***

*Then it did.*

George emerged, looking just as crazed as Clay felt, he had no shoes on, no jacket, just wearing his pjs. Clay wanted to laugh, but he *couldn’t*, because seeing the other right in front of him knocked

the breath completely from his chest. His heart was losing it, and so was the rest of him. He could not believe *any* of this was real.

Then George started walking closer, up the sidewalk and to the road where Clay was. His heart had never beat so fast, he was worried he would *die*. He was a deer caught in head lights, he wanted to move but he couldn't. George in *person* was a fact his brain couldn't comprehend.

So even as the other looked around, seeming to look right past him, all words were stuck in his throat.

George was *gorgeous*. Clay was going to *cry*, or die.

But how could he be dying when he had never felt so *alive*?

### ***10 seconds***

“George,” he broke finally, everything kicking into overdrive. “Turn to your left.” Clay directed, completely out of breath.

He watched as the other processed his words right there. He seemed frozen in time before realization hit him. His mouth fell in shock and his eyes widened, It was *cute*, watching it all happen right in front of him. Clay was falling in love even *more* which he didn't think was possible.

Painfully slow the other turned, and tornado sirens were blaring in his head. All the little metaphorical Clay's in his head were flipping their shits, evacuating and throwing tables.

Then George had fully turned, they were face to face.

“Clay?” He gasped, phone clattering to the ground.

Everything felt like it burst into color, freezing and unfreezing, then colliding all at once. George's eyes were on *him*. They were like lasers burning into Clay, he was being *seen*. Clay took the chance to drink the others' gaze in, both of their gazes locked onto each other like magnets. It was like they were *both* seeing each other for the first time.

He didn't feel *any* anxiety about being seen, it was long forgotten and buried underneath the absolute *euphoria* that was seeing George.

An open mouthed smile fell on Clay's face, emotion clotting in his throat.

“George!” he breathed out, like it was his very last breath or perhaps, his *first*.

### **Chapter End Notes**

Fun fact: There was someone in the bathroom with Clay trying to take a shit the whole time. They respectfully held back bc omg this dude is having a breakdown now it not

the time. The minute he left tho lol....

Anywayyyyyy HOW WAS IT? Please leave comments I love hearing from u guys and it FUELS ME. I also wanna make friends :D

## Time: Part One

### Chapter Notes

Hello, hope you didn't forget about me :) You may be wondering why this took so long... Well because the first part of this chapter is 9k. I broke the last chapter into two. But really this chapter broke me.

Book a dentist appointment, you're going to need it after the tooth rotting fluff, and I'm sorry.

Buckle up bitches.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Holy shit.” George whispered, eyes locked on Clay’s.

They lured his consciousness, sucking him into their depth like black holes. The other’s gaze was so enthralling and he couldn’t find it in him to pull away. He wasn’t breathing, there was no way.

“This isn’t. It’s not- It can’t be real.” He croaked out.

A smile grew on the other’s face, and George felt his eyes drawn to the languid motion. “It’s real.” He stated, and George watched his lips form the words as they drifted out.

They were a little chapped, but they seemed so soft, delicate almost. His upper lip was smaller than his lower, but it curved up around and rested above the others teeth like the impeccable frame on an expensive painting. And he had a small perfect cupid’s bow.

George’s heart was pounding and his brain felt stuck, “Fuck off. There’s-” He choked watching as Clay’s pink tongue darted out from between his teeth and sending George off somewhere else. “No way.”

His eyes followed the edge of Clay’s smile, getting caught on a divot in the soft skin. Part of him ascended “You have a dimple.” His whispered, brain mouth filter apparently shattered the second he laid eyes on Clay.

There was a soft snort from the other and heat gathered in George’s face. This was too perfect.

“This isn’t fucking real. I am dreaming.” He said flatly.

“Georgie, it’s real, I promise.” Clay took a step forward, arms out reached like George was a scared animal.

Well maybe he was.

George’s heart rate quickened and butterflies exploded in his stomach, he was hyper aware of the air around him, and the minute Clay stepped into his bubble the atmosphere had turned electric. The hairs on his arms rose as he stared incredulously at the man approaching him, staring down at him with the warmest expression he had ever seen.

He felt like he was basking in the sun, standing on the beach on a hot day, warm waves lapping gently at his feet, and sand squashed beneath his toes, breeze caressing his skin. Clay was positively radiant, he had to be, otherwise George wouldn't feel so warm.

*Clay was within touching distance.*

"Oh my god-" He gasped, trembling knees finally buckling without his control.

Next thing he knew he was boiling, wrapped up in warm arms and pressed against a solid chest. It felt like he was submerged in hot water, Clay was everywhere, it was *overwhelming*. He stood frozen, trapped in the other's hold.

"Did you just fall over?" He asked.

George only groaned, feeling embarrassed.

He could feel the vibrations of Clay's laughter, it was one thing to hear him wheeze but it was another to feel his chest contract as he did. "I can't believe you almost fell over. If you wanted me to hold you, you could've just asked." He said teasingly.

"Shut up." He replied, no bite in the words.

"You literally just feel for me George, I get to have this."

"Yeah, yeah." He said, trying to get over his embarrassment.

*Clay was holding him.*

Like he was finally coming to life again he found himself moving, arms moving up Clay's back and hands clasping onto his shoulders. He hugged him without thought, mind registering his reality and needing to test if it was real.

Clay's laughter slowly died out and suddenly George was being squeezed closer, his face fitting snugly into the crook of his neck. He felt solid, *real*.

They were hugging.

"It's really you." George spoke muffled into Clay's neck, breath touching the other's skin. "Oh my god." He added.

He could feel Clay shiver at that and it had something warm and tight blooming in his stomach.

Clay only hummed in response, the pleasant vibration that came with it sending shivers down George's spine.

It felt like they were in their own bubble, the whole world disappearing when they hugged. George couldn't focus on anything but Clay even if he wanted. Hugging the other was captivating, it made him feel like they were the only two people in the world. Filling him with warmth and happiness.

The other shifted in his hold and involuntarily his hands tightened on Clay's shoulders, feeling the bones and muscle beneath. He didn't care if this hug went on too long, he was soaking it in,

"Don't let go." He spoke. "I-I can't-" He swallowed thickly, feeling a mass of emotion. "My legs are still jelly."

Clay's arms tightened around him to an almost unbearable amount, and he buried his face into

George's hair. "I can't-I don't. I don't really want to." He mumbled into his hair, voice sounding just like the one he had heard over their calls.

Something burned deep within George.

*This was Clay.*

*Clay was here.*

*Clay was holding him.*

It all seemed to click in his head, brain finally connecting everything. Then desperation ignited aggressively within him in place of the confusion. His hands balled into the fabric on Dream's hoodie and he almost groaned at the lack of contact between them.

"Get closer." Clay whined, seemingly on the same page.

He had pulled George so close to him he felt that he may be enveloped completely by the taller man.

George shuffled a bit, well as much as Clay's grip would allow, trying to chase the feeling of Clay's body against him. His face was fully pressed against the bare skin of Clay's neck and it sent tingles down spine. His grasp was desperate, hands like talons trying to shove himself as close as humanly possible to Clay, he was squirming in his grip.

It wasn't enough.

Wasn't nearly close enough.

And then Clay shifted. He had George in a death grip now, completely trapped.

He was nearly fully supporting George's weight, which was a relief because George had lost all control of himself the minute Clay had pulled him tighter. Whether the other knew it or not, he was literally holding George together.

A feeling of content came over George, unrivaled by anything he had felt before. He was surrounded by Clay, his body, his heat, his scent.

He inhaled softly, lungs breathing the other in.

At first a potently sweet smell filled his nose, startling him from his daze. Briefly it was pleasant, but the longer he breathed it in the more his nose burned and the more the sweet facade of it melted and it instead smelled like straight chemicals. His nose scrunched in displeasure. There was an underlying earthy smell, a comforting smell, something that anchored him, but it was shrouded by the overpowering smell.

*Well that was unexpected.*

"Why-" He paused, brows furrowed. "Why do you smell like cheap perfume?"

He could feel the other stiffen against him and he took the momentary distraction to pull his head away and breathe in the fresh air around them.

"Um-" Clay cleared his throat. "I didn't shower before I got here, but I was coming to see you and I didn't want to smell like a plane."



A softer smile curled on George's face. "Like a plane?" He questioned, dryly.

"Yeah. I was in a rush and I was already in the taxi- Anyway, I ended up grabbing perfume instead of cologne."

George couldn't help but laugh, and he pressed his face further into Clay to try and muffle himself. "You were already in the taxi? Where the hell did you get perfume then?"

"Just some convenience store around the corner." Clay said.

George only laughed harder, "So you're telling me for our first meeting-" He pulled his face from Clay's neck to tilt it up, trying to meet the others eyes. "You bought some awful cheap per- " He halted, words stolen from him as his eyes met the other's face.

*His face.*

He hadn't gotten enough time to look at him, only seeing his eyes and lips, but now as the other stared right back down at him, face in full view and so close, George was rendered speechless. The words he had died right on the tip of his tongue as he stared up at Clay. Their faces mere inches away.

The other stared back and it sent George's heart through another freak out.

He really had freckles.

They dotted his face, some darker and more prominent than others, and some only a whisper of color. They trailed like a guide across his face, more concentrated on the high of his cheek bones, and dispersing further out on the other places of his face.

George followed the freckles on his nose and paused on the bridge. It was ever so slightly crooked, perhaps from a break or just naturally, but it suited the rest of his face. He trailed up, looking at his eyebrows, they were on the thicker side and wonderfully shaped. He had a strong jaw, full cheeks, deep set eyes, and a high brow bone.

As he analyzed every part of his face his brain kept reminding him that it was Clay he was looking at.

Every feature, every minuscule detail he appreciated so much more knowing who it belonged to. Finally able to tie all his feelings and best friend to a face, another human being. It was weird.

This was Clay.

"Um." Clay said breaking the air between them. George's eyes snapped up to the others eyes. "You're staring." He said quite awkwardly.

George searched his eyes, the slight pout on his face, the downward slant of his brows.

He was anxious.

It was so clearly transparent, and suddenly George realized what was so odd about the whole situation. Yes he was seeing his best friend for the first time, but also, something else had just felt a little off. Staring up at Clay's face now it made sense to him why he was struggling to comprehend the whole thing.

George had always thought Clay had wore his heart on his sleeve, but meeting him in person

completely changed that idea. He wore his heart on his face.

None of his emotions could hide away when his face was in view, George could see all his thoughts play out on his face. It was incredibly endearing and everything he never knew he wanted.

“Yeah.” He replied quite flatly. “Yeah I am.”

Clay bit his lip. “Well do you like what you see?” his voice sounded steady but his face screamed insecurity.

George’s heart melted. “Yeah- Yeah I like it a lot.” He admitted shyly, smiling with too much fondness.

And then something amazing happened.

At first it was a few splashes of pink blooming on the others cheeks, peeking out from between the freckles, and then right in front of his eyes it grew, until a brilliant and unforgettable flush overtook Clay’s entire face. Then much too soon the other was pulling him in again and hiding his face in his hair.

“Oh my god.” George said, smile much too wide for comfort. He was gushing, bursting at the seams with a flood of love, he had the urge to squeeze Clay like he was some cute animal.

“Shut up.” He mumbled, sounding embarrassed.

“You. Your face- Oh my god.” He just barely stopped the squeal coming from his throat. He pressed his mouth against the others shoulder, pushing his still widening smile in the fabric of his hoodie. “You’re shy.” He murmured more to himself than Clay.

*That’s so fucking cute what the fuck.*

Clay was going to kill him. George’s arms tightened around the other, smashing them together as he couldn’t help himself. Clay had no right to be so adorable. *No right.*

“Ughh I’m glowing.” Clay groaned into his hair.

George’s heart fluttered. “You are.”

*Well that was gay.* His brain provided helpfully.

“God here I was making fun of you for not being able to stand but- I can’t fucking believe you’re right here. I can barely keep us up.” Clay said.

It was then George noticed that the other seemed to be shaking a bit, perhaps from embarrassment or nerves, so he shifted a bit in hopes of taking some of his weight off.

“Wait,” Clay’s arms only tightened again and George stopped, snuggling back into the other.

“You’re insane.” He muttered into Clay’s hoodie. This whole situation was a bit insane. “You were legitimately on a plane the whole time?” He asked.

“Yeah, It was pretty shit.” Clay responded simply, as if he hadn’t just hopped on a ten hour flight to show up at his door.

Then it occurred to him,

“That’s why you left the stream early.” He said, computing how long that had been, and yet how soon it had all felt. “You’re crazy.” George stated.

“You like it.”

“I do.” He agreed.

They stood there, outside in front of the street, clinging to each other like they were the only people left. Just a few minutes prior he had been in his apartment, about to fall asleep, but here he was, feeling awake as ever. The reality of the situation hit him again.

“Wait, not that I’m complaining.” He started, hating to break the silence. “But could you please explain why you hopped on a ten hour flight to get here.”

Clay seemed to freeze. “Oh shit that’s right,” he said more so to himself. “I’m here for a reason.” He said.

George smiled, it was such a Clay thing to say. “Really? What a surprise.” George said sarcastically, it was just like Clay to forget something and it was honestly quite amusing.

Though that amusement dropped quite rapidly once Clay’s arms did from around him.

George felt the rush of cold upon him when Clay’s arms dropped, his own arms dropping after realizing the hug was over. He pushed himself away ignoring the pain in his heart, taking a few steps back, still a little unsteady on his feet. Clay looked a bit more serious, the gorgeous flush fading from his cheeks.

They had breathing room between each other now, a foot or so apart, and yet the distance made him feel like he couldn’t breathe. God, seeing Clay just once in person had turned him into someone so clingy.

Clay brought his hand up, scratching the back of his head nervously. “I’m here to talk. You deserve answers.”

*Oh, that’s right.*

“Yeah.” George said, now somewhat focused on the subject matter at hand instead of the man in front of him.

*Clay was pretty fucking tall.*

“George.” He huffed, staring right through George’s demeanor.

“I’m paying attention!” He protested, staring challengingly right back.

Clay dropped his arm, straightening his shoulders, and staring determinedly at George. It wasn’t hard to tell he was gearing up to say something. George knew how much harder it would be for Clay to do in person, right in front of him. Though there seemed to be an air of courage piercing through all of Clay’s anxiety, George could see it in his eyes. Having that expression set on him made him feel oddly intimidated, and winded.

“There’s a reason why I hadn’t shown you my face yet.” Clay stated.

“No shit.” George replied dryly.

There was a flash of amusement on Clay’s face as he responded, “Fuck off.” His tone was soft and

without a beat.

They both shared a smile, it was all so familiar and yet so different.

Then the moment ended and Clay cleared his throat before continuing. "Uhm, anyway. So I really should've shown you sooner, but the reason why was that-" He shifted, beginning to slouch in on himself.

George frowned, "You don't have to-"

"No, I want to." Clay said, courage back. "I'm tired of everything being left unsaid between us."

George felt himself a little off kilter at his statement, it was unexpected in it's honesty and effect on him. It had caught him off guard. It was definitely going to take some time to get used to Clay saying things so point blank.

"Okay," He said, fully readjusted to the serious air "Take your time."

They stood in silence for a while. The street light above them flickering. It was old, needed to be fixed, he always stared in annoyance when he passed, but this time his focus wasn't on it. Instead, George took the time to appreciate the other, eyes never leaving him even for a second.

"I didn't want things to change." He finally admitted in the quiet.

George smiled reassuringly at him, hoping to welcome more admissions.

Clay seemed to soothe at this, continuing, "I thought- I was insecure. I've had a lot of issues with being overly critical of myself."

"I noticed." George added, though with no malicious.

"Yeah, you've always been good at that." He shuffled. "I just- there's so many expectations you know? So many people to let down." He seemed sullen, and it put a damper on the high George had been feeling earlier. Clay continued, "The more I waited the harder it got. The weight of it all was crushing me," George wanted to do something, he wasn't sure what but seeing Clay like this was heartbreaking. "I'm just some average guy. I can't- I couldn't live up to all that. So I was too scared to show what I looked like." The hurt in his voice was clear and George was about to comfort him before Clay finished, "It was always worse with you though."

"Worse?" George asked, a bit confused.

"Yeah." He admitted. "I didn't want you to be one of them."

"One of who?" George pushed, brows furrowed in confusion.

"One of the many people I let down because I can't live up to their expectations."

George's heart sank at the words. It was the final line that had done his heart completely in, it no longer had a fighting chance. He couldn't help but frown. That was the last thing he wanted Clay to think about himself.

He opened his mouth to protest, "That's not true-"

"I know now." Clay said, George felt himself lighten at the words, "But I didn't then. And my anxiety made it worse- Um, it's cause your opinion means the most to me. You're always on my mind, I always want to impress you. I didn't want whatever we had to change," Clay looked away

seeming to get too nervous, and then he continued, "Because being with you is as close to perfection I can get."

George felt his heart swell at the statement, and his mouth drop. Clay had always been a sweet talker, but in person George felt like everything was amplified. He could barely handle any of the shit that was going on, let alone Clay saying stuff like that. He wasn't sure how to respond to that.

So he figured honesty would be the best way to go.

He swallowed down his feelings before speaking, "What we have isn't brittle. What I feel for you." He fidgeted, scared to address what they had been avoiding. "It's not fragile."

Clay finally looked back at him, at first with shock and then with a smile. He took a step forward with a teasing smile on his face. "It's a ten huh?"

George rolled his eyes, though he was amused. "Hey Mr. it's an eleven. I don't want to hear it."

"Yeah, okay" Clay said, amusement dancing in his eyes, happiness looked good on him.

"But uh- Getting back to- You know." He gestured his hands seemingly nervous. "I uh, almost backed out of this. But I realized, there's no one who loves me like you do." George felt his heart flip, blush burning his face. "*They* don't really love me. They don't even see me. You- You do, you know so much about me. Everyone else's opinion? All of the eyes on me? They don't matter like you do."

He looked sheepish as he continued, taking another step forward, "I really- I should've trusted you. I'm sorry for treating you like that- I'm sorry for everything I said that night," He stepped forward, reaching out before seeming to decide against it and returning his arm to his side, George had wished he had decided differently. "I should've been honest." He finished, sounding broken with regret.

George sighed, playing the conversation through in his head. It was heavy, talking about these things was hard. It always felt like he was on delay, taking longer to process topics like these.

"I..." He trailed off a bit lost in everything Clay had said. "I get it." He finally said, "Like- I get where you were coming from. I-" He paused, struggling with his words. He didn't want to say anything wrong, say anything that would come off detached or awkward. Clay had just poured his heart out to him, but he had always been the one better at speaking than George. Of all the words he poured over in his head, and all the sentences he formulated, nothing felt like the proper response.

He supposed the best way was to not overthink it, but be vulnerable himself.

"I thought- I just felt like someone who wasn't special to you." He said simply, feeling a bit awkward.

There was a sharp intake of breath and the other stepped forward again, the space between them diminishing. "You are." Clay spoke honestly. "And that's another thing. You're *really* special to me."

George's heart fluttered. "Am I?" He spoke in the space between them, unknowingly gravitating closer himself.

There was maybe an inch or two of empty space between them now and George didn't know what to think of it. The shift in the atmosphere between them was very apparent and it was leaving his

head spinning. He hadn't realized they had gotten so close to each other until now.

One minute things had been serious, and the next there was a burning warmth in him reigniting. He couldn't help it though, the proximity was jarring, but in a good way. Every time they exhaled their breaths would mingle in the air between them, and the thought was doing funny things to his brain.

"Yeah." Clay said softly, nearly whispering at this point, "There's another thing I wanted to say, but I think you already know it."

George swallowed thickly, unsure of what was happening. Neither of them were backing away from the other, and the bubble around them felt intimate.

"I'm confused." He admitted, staring up at the other.

"Cmon Georgie," The nickname made his heart pound. "You have to know by now." Clay sounded a bit teasing, and it made George feel like he was missing a key part of the conversation.

His brows furrowed. "Know what." He asked.

Clay smiled, "I flew out to see you." he said as if it was the answer.

He did, George thought. Like a crazy person, though George didn't know how it was fitting into the conversation. If this were a call he would suspect that the line was cracking out, and he was only getting bits and pieces of what Clay was saying, but it wasn't, it was in person. So it left him to futilely jam the puzzle pieces of this broken conversation together.

"Your opinion is the most important to me." Clay added, and then George realized he was listing things.

He raised a brow, it was another piece but now he was just struggling with two pieces instead of one. He wasn't sure what the importance of his opinion had to do with the conversation, or with Clay flying out. The pieces he was given to complete the puzzle didn't even appear to be meant for the same puzzle. It only confused him further.

And then Clay added one last piece,

"I said it was an eleven." He stated with finality. "It's obvious."

He was watching him with intensity, which added to the pressure to figure it out.

These were all things he had done. All pieces to the puzzle of this conversation. This conversation of things left unsaid until now, things even left unseen. All suddenly in the light to be observed by George.

They were all pieces that spoke volumes, impactful moments to both of them. On their own they were a testament to the friendship between them, perhaps even pinnacles of their relationship. Though all together, the pieces formed a different picture than alone. An image closer to a devotion to a relationship of a specific kind, a relationship they did not have.

"Wait you mean like-" The picture started to form in his mind, and he couldn't help but feel silly. "You're kidding." He finished, feeling thoroughly shocked and a bit bewildered.

Clay snorted, seeming to read the expression on George's face like it was glass, he must know the conclusion that he came to. "Really?" He asked, almost annoyingly smug. "You're so cute," He said fondly.

And then finally, confirming everything he stated, “You know I’m not kidding.”

“Okay.” George said fully off kilter, not seeing a glimpse of anything but truth on Clay’s face. “This is actually a fucking dream.”

Clay only seemed to smile wider, still no hint of a joke. “Nope I’m the only dream here.”

He ignored the bad joke, “Wai-”.

And before he could finish, the final nail, or rather boulder in the coffin of this vague conversation, “I love you George.” Clay interrupted, words coming out with breathtaking ease.

*Well shit, his conclusion had been right.*

It was like the words were formed perfectly to leave Clay’s mouth, as if he had said the phrase a million times to himself. Like it was the most natural thing in the world to fall from his mouth, but to George the implication behind the words was foreign. It was all jumbled in his brain, because even though George has heard them before, he had never heard Clay say them with that connotation.

“Oh.” he spoke softly. Before pausing, his brain still computing.

The puzzle fit together now, painting the perfect picture in his mind with an absurd amount of clarity. So much so he couldn’t comprehend how he hadn’t put it together sooner, couldn’t even imagine not seeing the picture staring right back at him in the first place.

Everything seemed to click into place, why their friendship had felt off, why they had been so close and yet so far, the fight, this odd conversation. It all made sense.

All the uncertainty he had felt began to evaporate, his mind back on kilter. And through the thick cloud of uncertainty he felt drifting up far into the air, something unveiled, he was viewing their entire relationship in a new light.

“You’re serious?” He questioned although solid in the revelation.

Clay’s face was red again and his confession finally seemed to make him nervous, though there wasn’t a speck of regret that George could see on his expression. “Yeah- Of course.” He said.

*Of course.*

His body was humming with warmth, Clay had just returned his feelings, and he was on cloud nine. He was unable to contain the giddy smile on his face. He had thought he hit the peak of the night seeing Clay in person, but it was nothing in comparison to now.

The fluttering butterflies in his stomach had turned into waves and he felt fucking euphoric. If he had gone supernova before, now the whole universe had collapsed in on itself in an astronomical event incomprehensible to the human brain.

*Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god.* He thought, it was a mantra stuck on a loop in his head.

He couldn’t help himself and he took a step forward, closing some of the last bit of distance between them, his heart thudding. “Could we?” He asked softly, looking pointedly at the other’s lips and then back to his eyes.

He noticed Clay’s hand twisted in the hem of his hoodie, and he stopped his approach. Glancing

up again to see the other, a glimpse of anxiety shining through his expression. He was worrying his bottom lip between his teeth.

That's not what he expected. "What's wrong?" He asked gently.

"I- George." Clay seemed to slump in on himself and George began to worry. "You mean like?" His eyes looked at George's lips, seeming too shy to say kiss so instead implying it.

George nodded.

Clay's eyes rose back to his eyes. "Like- You mean- right now?" He asked.

Okay, he was very nervous.

"Clay." George said a bit mystified by his reluctance.

"Wait- "Clay said suddenly. His sentence died out and contradicting his words he stepped forward, only closing the space between them more. "I was just- we still need to talk about-"

"Do you not want to?" George asked, trying to be as gentle with the topic as he could. Though Clay's gravitation towards him, and his eyes flickering between his lips and eyes, was sending mixed messages.

"W-What?" Clay's eyes fluttered from his lips to his eyes once again, he was red. "Of course I do." He laughed nervously, he sounded and looked completely honest.

So he was just nervous.

George rose up on his tiptoes and rested his hands on Clay's shoulders slowly, taking care to try and give Clay time to stop him. He didn't, infarct his hands coming tentatively to rest on his waist.

George's eyes shifted from one of Clay's eyes to the other, he couldn't choose which to lock onto. "Then kiss me." He said.

"Wait George," Clay protested, though not moving away. "We need to- I was like in the middle of an apology," His grip on George's sides tightened, seeming to have to withhold himself. "I don't- I don't want you thinking that this is a joke, or that-" His brows furrowed and George could see his mind jump rapidly around as the expressions on his face mirrored it, "The *fight*, I hurt you and I-

"I forgive you." George said simply, trying and failing to keep up with Clay's thoughts.

Though at those words Clay's face twisted like he had eaten a sour lemon, guilt seeming to dominate the expression. George could guess the words he was about to say before they left his mouth,

"I hurt you."

He got it, he really did. The guilt of their fight was still eating away at him too. "And I hurt you." He said, hoping to help Clay understand they were in the same boat.

"But-"

George frowned, gripping hard at Clay's shoulders. "It's *okay* to have this." He said, words escaping mere inches from the other's lips. They were so close.

Clay's breath seemed to catch, and he searched George's face. George watched it all play out in his



face, all his thoughts and anxiety apparent. Finally he stopped chewing his lip, a breath escaping him, his eyes were locked on George now.

"I'm scared." He admitted in the air between them.

His eyes stared back at Clay's, neither looking away, both unrelenting in their gaze. "Why?" He whispered.

"You're so important- I'm nervous." Clay paused, voice lowering. "This doesn't feel real. What if you don't- what if we do this and you don't feel the same."

*Oh.*

George felt compassion for Clay like he hadn't for anyone else. Seeing him so unsure and anxious right in front of him was heartbreaking, and all he wanted to do was help.

He licked his lip, he wasn't good with words. "Then let me show you how I feel." He grabbed the side of his neck, thumb brushing up and down, he could feel him swallow. "Is that okay?"

Clay faltered, biting his lip and looking down at George with something he couldn't place. George could feel himself hanging off the edge, ready to fall right into him and it was sending his nerves into a frenzy. After what felt like years Clay spoke,

"Yes."

It was all George needed to hear.

He moved slowly, dragging his fingers from the side of the others neck to the back of it. He savored the smooth feeling of his neck, tasting every inch of the skin with his own. When his hand curled around it, cupping just below the back of his head he pulled down gently, hardly using any force.

Clay seemed to get the memo, leaning down with the guidance of his hand until their lips were only centimeters away. He rested his forehead on George's, stopping in his descent. They were breathing each other in, Clay's breaths ghosting over George's lips. It was a tease to what was to come.

He was so close yet George had never felt so aware of the distance. He had Clay right in his hand, skin meeting skin, attention all on him. George felt an intense need bubble in him, powerful and all encompassing. He bit his lip, Clay's eyes were immediately drawn down to it.

"*Fuck.*" Clay whispered, entranced by the other, "George are you sure-"

George tilted his head, perched on the tips of his toes he shot up, bursting with need. Cutting the other off when their lips met with feather light touch. The second their lips collided the world around him faded, and all he could perceive was Clay.

His eyes shut and his heart rate skyrocketed, all his want rupturing and spilling boiling heat through his body. He was shaking, He could barely focus on his lips when he felt like he was exploding. It wasn't enough though, he got one taste and now he was hooked.

But then Clay finally moved, tilting his own head and slotting their lips together fully, he pressed back and George nearly melted. He sighed into the kiss, and Clay's arms wrapped around his waist. His breath caught and then he was being pulled closer. George almost broke the kiss, having to adjust at the strain in his feet.

Tentatively he pulled away, and he felt Clay's arms tighten in protest.

He opened his eyes to see the other staring back at him, frown on his lips.

He only smirked, "You're so fucking tall." Clay's eyes tracked the movement of his lips, they were hooded.

George set back on his feet, they were hurting from staying perched on them. Though the pain was minuscule to the euphoria he felt rushing through his veins from the contact.

Before the added distance could exist for more than a few seconds, Clay leaned down.

"You're so fucking short." He said, before leaning down and connecting their lips once again. George startled, eyes fluttering shut in delay with a shocked noise.

Clay only hummed into the kiss. Causing something competitive to spark in George, and his arms came up to rest around Clay's neck, pulling him in closer. This seemed to catch the other off guard and George relished it.

They still didn't move their lips, just staying connected and savoring the pressure of each other.

He was like honey, sweet and sticky, George couldn't find it in himself to pull away. He wanted more, so much more. So he moved his lips, coming back for breath before diving back in. Clay's touch was invigorating, with every touch, every drag of his hands he was healing. It was electric but at the same time numbing.

Kissing him was like *drowning*.

George couldn't keep a grasp on his breath. He was surrounded by Clay like water, his scent, his touch, his body. He was submerged in him and no amount of thrashing could pull him out. He was a man lost at sea and with each passing second he was sinking deeper.

Clay was kissing him like he had never been shy in the first place. Clay's hands had moved to his sides, gripping like George was his anchor. They couldn't stop moving, falling in sync, an unspoken rhythm setting the pace.

He felt the need to explore, hands slipping up from Clay's neck to weave into his hair, entranced by the soft strands. Clay shuddered, and George flush with him could feel it, mesmerized by the rush it gave him.

His hand rose, right on the back of Clay's head, longer hair slipped through his fingers and without much thought he fisted it in his hand.

Clay gasped into his mouth, and suddenly pulled away.

George's eyes snapped open, apology on the edge of his lips but it dissipated at the sight in front of him.

Clay's pupils were blown wide, lips pink and plush from their kiss, he was completely red, his eyes were set on George's and a smile was stretching across his face.

"Fuck." He cursed softly, voice hoarse and deep.

George took in a breath, feeling winded. "Fuck indeed."

Clay's eyes flickered down to his lips, before returning back up. "Can I-"

Before George could lean in to answer the question a cold breeze brushed against them. He couldn't help the violent shiver as the brisk air swept across his bare skin. Clay's brows furrowed at the reaction, then realization crossed it, before a stern look came across his face.

"Wait fuck!" He said, eyes sweeping over George's bare arms. "You don't have a jacket."

George had kind of forgotten that he was still in his pajamas himself, too caught up in the events of the night. "Oh my god." He said, his attention brought back to the world around them. It was freezing. Clay only seemed to look more upset so quickly he spoke, "I'm fine."

Clay raised a brow, looking down with an even more stern look on his face. His eyes seemed to pause on the ground below them, George followed his line of sight and stiffened. Before he could say anything to quell the other he spoke,

"You- George, you're not even wearing shoes!" He shouted both amused and exasperated, his hands leaving George's sides to gesture at the bare feet innocently below them.

The warmth of the moment seemed to have taken over all his senses, because now he was only staring with mild confusion at his feet which were aflame with the cold bite of the concrete below.

His brows furrowed, he had forgotten shoes.

He looked back up at Clay who was staring at him with an annoying look. "And who's fault is that?" He asked petulantly.

Clay sputtered and it was endlessly amusing to watch. "How is that my fault?" He asked incredulously.

George gave him a blank look. "You're the one who showed up at my place, unannounced, at 1 in the morning." He raised a brow, "You expect me to grab shoes when you tell me you're outside my fucking apartment."

Clay knew he had a point, and George could tell by the expression on his face, but he tried anyway, "Aren't you cold?!"

"Well I wasn't until you pulled away." George stated, sass leaking from his tone.

"Oh my god." His voice was laced with a mix of disbelief and fondness. "Why didn't I notice?"

"Can we go back to kissing?" George interrupted, unamused with the fact that the longer this went on the colder he was getting. He wanted to chase the heat of the moment.

Clay stared at him like he had just said he killed the queen, though amused. "No! You need-"

George checked out of the conversation, instead staring longingly at Clay's moving lips. It was genuinely freezing so Clay did have a point, and the moment between them had long since passed. George sighed, realizing he should probably do something. Briefly he grieved the loss of the moment.

Clay had still been talking so George interrupted, "Oh my god, you big baby, c'mon." He grabbed Clay's hand, it was warmer than his own although that wasn't much of an accomplishment at this point.

He stepped back, gently pulling on the others hand so he would follow behind him as he walked to the front door. He heard the other hurry to grab his suitcase before allowing himself to be led, it

graced his face with a smile.

Each step he took seemed to send a line of ice up the pain highways called nerves leading up his legs. George really had no idea how he hadn't noticed sooner. He should have left the outside earlier because his feet were starting to grow numb, though he didn't regret his decision to stick outside for a while. His lips were still warm.

They climbed up the few steps that led to the door of George's apartment building. Once they reached the door itself, George fished in his pockets with his free hand. When his fingers met the cool bite of metal he relaxed.

Thank fuck he didn't forget his keys too.

He fumbled with the key in the lock, Clay standing patiently behind him. It was really a pain to get the key to fit in properly, maybe it was his fingers slowed by the cold, or just the adrenaline that still resided in him, but the one thing for sure was that it was awful. Finally he heard the tell tale click of the door unlocking and he dropped his keys back in his pocket.

"Wait-" Clay said, breaking the silence.

George stopped in turning the knob of the door, he glanced back brow raised. Clay had not just whined to him about him staying out in the cold, watch him struggle with a lock, and then just decide to delay their escape into warmth.

"What?" He asked trying to keep the impatience from his voice, though he knew he failed.

"I uh-" Clay said, seeming embarrassed which only had George brow raising higher. "This was very sudden and I kind of-" His hand tightened on the handle of his suitcase. "I don't have a hotel for tonight and if I want to find a place to stay I should start like now."

George turned to him fully, brow ascending into the stratosphere. "You're kidding."

Clay glanced away, laughing nervously. He was messing with his suitcase handle still, clearly embarrassed. "No actually, there was this whole thing with the front desk abo-"

"With me." George interrupted, he could feel the warmth radiating from the open door, he really did not have patience.

Clay's attention snapped back to him, "What?" he asked fidgeting now absent.

"You're staying with me." George said simply. "Cancel your booking."

Clay's mouth dropped. "What?!"

Clay's intense gaze on him had George's brain backtracking a bit, impatience deleting itself and temperature problems pushed aside.

*Did he really just say that?*

"I mean if you want to." George rushed, suddenly feeling a little self conscious. "I just think it would be nice..." He glanced away, debating if he should finish his sentence before deciding to just go for it. "To have you with me." He finished quietly.

Clay's expression shifted and George felt himself relax a bit, there was a smile on his face. "Aww" He said annoyingly. "You want me with you?"

George regretted speaking already.

“Clay read the fucking room.” He said dryly.

Clay threw his head back and laughed, George’s brain burning the image of him laughing in his mind for eternity.

He had thought the sound of his laugh was the best thing in the world, but seeing it was another experience entirely. Clay was unbelievably expressive, and all his mannerisms were endearing. It was infecting George with serotonin, and George was probably seconds away from a crippling addiction to it. He was smiling and holding in a laugh himself.

That was definitely worth it.

Eventually Clay’s laughter died out with a few chuckles here and there, although he was still basking in the afterglow of his amusement. “Okay sorry,” He said, a smile wide on his face. “I would love to stay with you.” He stopped seeming to hesitate on something before speaking, “baby.”

A blush rose to his cheeks almost immediately and George whirled around, hoping to avoid embarrassment. Clay was an asshole, “Shut up.” He muttered fumbling with the door before pulling it open fully.

He barely managed to keep the door open for Clay to step in after him, as the minute his body was engulfed with a warmer temperature he had melted, hand that had been holding the door drooping. Clay shot him an annoyingly smug look as the door shut behind them and they stood at the base of the stairs, George pausing to bask in the warmth.

“That better?” He asked, eyeing the way George’s arms wrapped around himself.

“Not better than before.” George said, eyes set on Clay’s lips, clear in what he was referring to.

The smug smile fell off Clay’s face and George smirked. He turned from Clay, beginning his ascent up the stairs, hearing the other follow behind, dragging the suitcase loudly up the stairs.

“Oh my neighbors are going to love me.” George said sarcastically over the sounds of the suitcase dying behind him.

“Well do *you* want to carry it up your long ass stairs?” Clay shot back, though seeming to be a bit more cautious with the suitcase hitting the stairs.

“Nope, sure you can handle it on your own.” George replied.

They finally got up to his apartment, after probably disturbing quite a few of the neighbors. George was going to accept any noise complaints with glee, they could all go cry themselves to sleep because George was way too happy to be discouraged.

He fumbled with the keys in his pocket, but he was much quicker in unlocking the door. Feeling generous, and not like he was freezing to death, he held it open fully and gestured for the other to step in. Clay did, though a bit awkwardly, suitcase rolling behind him, he stopped only a few feet from the door.

George stepped in, feeling his shoulders relax in the warmer air, soothing his cold skin. It was such a nice feeling, like jumping in the hot tub after being in a cold pool.

He shut the door behind him, making sure to lock it. The light from the hallway vanished and left the place dark, so he quickly flicked the switch, light flooding the living room.

He finally turned, looking at Clay's annoyingly tall self standing awkwardly, "You like it?" He asked.

Clay's eyes flickered around, though his body was not moving with them to observe the place. He seemed so out of his element that George couldn't help but find it cute. There was something amusing about such a tall and otherwise confident guy, looking lost in his small apartment.

"It's pretty shit." Clay responded sarcastically, eyes setting back on George and seeming a bit more relaxed.

George chuckled, walking over to the other and punching him in the arm as he passed him. "Shut up, and follow me." He said, continuing to walk past.

Clay startled a bit from the contact, but a smile fell on his face and he began to follow closely behind. "Bossy." He remarked, long strides quickly catching up with George.

"Clay." He said exasperated, leading them to his room and stepping in.

"George." He whined back.

They stood in the room, the light was still left off from when he had scrambled from the bed, so George turned it on. It bathed the room, and when it did he startled, George hadn't noticed how close Clay had placed himself next to him until the light illuminated him. It made something soft stir in his chest.

He let the warmth simmer as he spoke, "This is my room." He said walking in further and gesturing around it. "The bed isn't made but you can expect that since I was sleeping before you--"

"You weren't complaining." Clay interrupted, following behind George as they further entered his room.

"I'm not now." He said stopping and turning to face the other, feeling bold. "Especially not now that I get to share it with you."

His heart hammered at the daring move and he willed his anxiety away. It was a valid way to test the boundaries and see if the other wanted to share the bed so he had taken it.

Thankfully Clay's face lit up, "Yes!" he said punching the air. "Score!" it was quite cute.

"Oh my god you dork." George said fondly through his wide smile, Clay's expressiveness would never get old. He let the thought linger for a bit before speaking again, "So what do you wanna do?" He asked. "You can sleep if you want."

Clay snorted, "If you think we're going to go to sleep after all this you're an idiot." He said with fondness.

George smiled. "Good thing I'm not an idiot then." He pondered their options before continuing, "How about a movie? You can finally shower, and I'll just put something on."

"Oh thank god," Clay said with relief in his voice. "I feel so gross." He was already moving to grab his stuff from the suitcase.

He flipped it over, unzipping it and rooting around in his stuff. Surprisingly he seemed quite organized, and George didn't need to question why he only had one bag. There was so much fit in there he wasn't sure it was physically possible.

Once Clay seemed to shovel all the stuff he needed in his arms he turned to look at him, George pointed to a door connected to his room.

"Bathroom is over there." He said. "I can show you how the shower works?"

"Yes please." Clay responded, a grateful smile on his face.

He let George lead the way to the bathroom, he still held everything quite impressively in his hands, George didn't hear anything drop like he had expected. He pushed the door open and when they entered Clay set his stuff down on the counter. Paying him no mind George walked straight to the shower and kneeled down.

Clay took a moment to finish settling his stuff on the counter, but once he did he turned. When he saw George kneeling near the shower he walked over, stopping and staring down at George. If it was any other six foot man looming over him George might feel uncomfortable but with Clay he just tilted his head and smiled back up at him.

They held gazes for a second and George basked in it for a bit, before looking down at the faucet.

"So this is the bath, if you want to shower you have to pull this." He pulled the little tab on top of the faucet up. "Up, and the water will go to the showerhead. Just remember to push it down when you're done. Oh and-" he moved over pointing to the knob on the wall. "Right is cold and left is hot, be careful cause it's hotter than it seems so adjust it first before pulling the tab."

"Okay, I got it." Clay said, sounding eager.

He nudged George to the side a bit as he leaned down and turned the water on, beginning to adjust the temperature.

The feeling of having Clay so close to him left his skin tingling and it was distracting. George felt the urge to hug him again, but he wasn't sure if Clay would be keen on the idea and he was feeling too shy to ask. But Clay's presence was glaringly obvious and the longer he stared at him the worse the urge got. He decided to leave before he did anything.

"Okay cool," George said, standing up and brushing up against Clay on the way. His heart stuttered and he scrambled to control his brain, "Let me grab you a towel." He said way too quietly and quickly, Clay didn't seem to notice.

George just left the bathroom, shutting the door behind him and taking the distance to mentally calm himself down. He went to his closet and grabbed one of his fluffiest towels. He was not a shit host, and he always reserved the best towels for guests.

Taking a steadying breath, he turned and walked back to the bathroom. He opened the door and wandered into it, realizing all too late he probably should've said something. Clay had already set the water to his liking and was in the midst of taking his shirt off.

"Shit sorry." Clay said, already turning red with the shirt stuck rucked up around his head.

"You're all good." George muttered averting his eyes and feeling like he should be the one apologizing. He sympathized with Clay's embarrassment, he seemed constantly nervous, dude could not catch a break. "Just didn't think you'd be taking your shirt off first chance you got." He

joked.

Clay chuckled, seeming to relax a bit and finally removing his shirt fully. Locker room rules George thought. "What can I say, that plane was nasty and I am like ten seconds from jumping into the shower."

"Okay well at least wait until I'm out of here." George said amused at Clay's distaste for the plane.

He turned away from Clay, attention on the counter and away from anything distracting. He was here for a reason.

Carefully he set the towel he had been holding on the counter, taking care not to knock anything over. Clay had assorted his stuff a bit particularly on the white counter, George had to admit seeing it next to his own made him feel something soft. He wondered if Clay always arranged his stuff in a specific way, or if he had just done it out of nerves or something.

As he surveyed the layout of the stuff, his eyes caught a speck of toothpaste that he had left earlier in the night in the sink. It stared up at him, glaringly obvious although blending with the white of the sink. He must've glanced over it when going through his night routine. He grimaced, the one downfall to having Clay over like this was that he literally had no time to make sure everything was clean.

Staring prolonged at the sink made him uncomfortable, so quickly he reached out, hand resting on the cold knob connected to the base of the faucet. Without much thought he turned on the tap, feeling relief come from a place he didn't realize was tense when it turned smoothly. The water flowed with ease though it's pace unnerved him, it was fast.

Ignoring the feeling, George reached out his hand, placing it under the cold water. He used it to direct the water to the spot with the toothpaste, trying to ignore the growing unease he felt watching it. He noticed the bowl fill up fast as he began to wash the toothpaste off the side of the sink. It made him think of the dream.

The sound of running water, the vision of rising water, all of it matched with the memory pushing at his mind. It felt silly but the images and sounds flashing into his head couldn't be stopped, it had just been a dream but even now it still haunted him.

His breaths came shorter as he waited impatiently for gravity and the weight of the water to drag the toothpaste down. He couldn't chase the familiar feeling of something being wrong, off, not real.

It was fine he told himself.

*This is real.*

But his mind unhelpfully recalled earlier, wanting to contradict itself.

*"This isn't fucking real. I am dreaming."*

He had said that, and he had meant it. It replayed in his mind like a broken record. George shook his head, of course he would feel this way, it was just jarring to have Clay here so things felt off, not real. But Clay has reassured him, he said- no- he *promised* it was real.

He focused back at the sink, feeling a panic claw at his throat despite trying to stay rational. He tried to stay calm.



*Clay promised.*

Once the last of the toothpaste fell into the collected water he breathed a sigh of relief.

*It was fine.*

He reached to turn the sink off, hand slightly shaking though relieved to be done with this, but to his acute horror the knob resisted. All sense of calm leaking rapidly from him as he realized it was stuck.

Immediately something sick twisted in his throat and he tried to swallow it down. The knob wouldn't budge. The feeling he was trying to keep under wraps fully surfaced, his panic no longer quelled.

The knob felt like it was never meant to turn, it wasn't right, wasn't *real*.

"Shit." He whispered, pulling at the stubborn knob with an increasing sense of worry and pure dread.

His grip went white around it and it dug into his skin painfully, cold and unforgiving.

*No, no, no, no, no.*

It was fine.

He was fine.

It had to be fine.

It was just a dream. *This* was real.

Clay promised.

It still wouldn't turn, he was using more strength, growing frantic.

He couldn't breathe.

There was no air.

*"Nope I'm the only dream here."*

That was a joke, *it was a joke*, Clay didn't mean that literally. Why had he remembered that? Why was it coming up now?

His brain was just grasping at straws, trying to heighten his panic.

This had to be real, he told himself.

The knob was just stuck.

It didn't matter that it had never been stuck before,

That it had turned into place so easily but now it had felt like stone,

That it had always turned smoothly aside from when he was in that dream.

*That dream.*

Was he breathing anymore?

Everything was fine.

This was real.

He knew it was.

But as he stared into the sink with increasing terror he noticed one glaring fact,

Something painfully clear,

Something he couldn't ignore,

Something that revealed the *truth*.

*It wasn't draining.*

The water was collecting rapidly, unrelenting, and despite the drain being open, working fine before, it wasn't draining.

The sink was going to overflow.

His breathing stopped as he stared into the water.

*"The room is going to overflow George."* He heard from somewhere deep and dark, buried in his conscious as he stared horrified into the sink, it was *Dream's* voice.

And then he knew.

*He knew.*

## Chapter End Notes

I said I was sorry didn't I?

Oops I did it again- haha I love Britney Spears.

Anyway please scream at me in the comments it fuels me, next chapter on the way.

Oh and... Happy Holidays <3

[Tumblr](#)

## Time: Part Two

### Chapter Notes

Heyyyy I am backkkkk GUESS WHO HAD TO SPLIT A CHAPTER AGAIN. THIS AIN'T THE END BECAUSE THIS CHAPTER TURNED OUT TO BE 14K. So I split it....AGAIN!

So that's why the chapter count went up again... Remember when this shit was supposed to be like 5 chapters? no? me either.

I hope you enjoy this, writing this murdered me inside. I am in capable of writing fluff I think. My brain is in shambles, this chapter gave me writers block constantly..

That said pop off guys, it do b 9k and I didn't even want to read it to edit so ha good luck motherfuckers. Book a dentist appointment for all the fluff.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*The water was rising,*

*Was he breathing?*

*Had it already consumed him?*

“George.”

*It was Dream's voice.*

*The sound of rushing water was overpowering.*

*He was going to die.*

*He should try the door.*

“Georgie?”

*But he couldn't move.*

*Why couldn't he move?*

*Why did it feel like his chest was going to explode?*

“Hey, you good?”

The voice ripped through the sound of the water, closer than anything else in the room, though it wasn't the thing that snapped him from his thoughts. It was the feeling of sudden warmth pressing against his back, searing and bold, demanding attention.

Instantly he was snapped from his panicked thoughts, drawn into the present and away from the iron bars of the prison of his mind. It was such a quick change he felt a jolt run through him.

*It was Clay's voice.*

His eyes seemed to shudder with his body before firing signals back to his brain.

The sink was not overflowing, in fact it was draining as normal. He blinked a few times, waiting with tense muscles for the water to return, but it never did. It was then it dawned on him that it was all in his head.

*A panic attack?*

The warmth hadn't left and he found himself leaning back slightly, right into Clay's warm chest. He couldn't find it in him to feel embarrassed and instead took steadying breaths, relieved that Clay was leaning up against him, anchoring him to the present.

Perhaps Clay didn't realize what he was doing, but he was always good at just knowing what George needed. The other's breathing seemed to be more pronounced than normal, deep and steady, so prominent it almost forced him to follow along. He did his best to match Clay's breathing with his own, grateful for his presence.

When his breathing calmed and he felt steady, more grounded in reality, his eyes moved up, meeting Clay's concerned gaze.

He was staring back at him with soft eyes, face lax and open, warm and welcoming. It oozed affection and spurred the feeling itself in George.

His cheeks heated. He probably looked a little silly, hunched over the sink hyperventilating and worrying about a knob. But Clay's gaze held no judgement, only warmth.

"Uh-" He cleared his throat. "The knob is stuck." He whispered eyes locked on Clay intensely, as if scared the second he looked away the reality around them would shatter.

He was waiting for Clay to vanish, to leave him to be engulfed in water, to laugh in his face, just like Dream had. Though it was all for naught, as Clay did none of those things. Instead he spoke softly, voice warm like his expression,

"Here let me," Tentatively he reached around George.

The bare skin of his arm brushing against George's and leaving goosebumps in its wake. Finally able, George tore his eyes away to watch the movement. Seeing as Clay's hand wrapped around the knob just above his own. His hand was comfortingly warm like his back, and it seeped into George's own cold hand, alleviating more than just the cold.

Hesitantly George let go of the knob, allowing Clay to readjust his grip and staring fixated at his hand.

It was then he noticed the scabs and light bruising marring the very hand that was to help. Confusion filled him, wondering how he hadn't noticed the injury previously.

For a second he worried, the wound looked like something that came from a punch and he rushed to imagine what situation Clay had gotten into. But then Clay moved, the knuckles turned white around the red with exertion as he gripped the knob. George made note to ask about it later.

And then to his shock Clay twisted his hand and pulled the knob into the off position with ease.

George watched as the stream of water stopped, the water that had once appeared to stay stagnant

in the bowl of the sink was draining as if it had been all along, and likely had. Soon only small drops left the faucet and no water left in the sink. George felt himself relax and the rest of the anxiety that had been building slip down the sink with the rest of the water.

“Thanks.” He breathed out, feeling the panic attack completely recede.

They both lingered for a moment, staring at each other in the mirror, Clay still pressed against his back. He was searching his face, maybe he didn’t understand why George was about to literally fall apart over a sink, but he knew something was up. It made him feel very exposed, those gorgeous eyes picking all of him apart, but for some reason he couldn’t say it bothered him.

Then they stopped, locked on George’s eyes.

It took a second too long for him to realize Clay was waiting for something, and not just staring him down for no reason. His look was asking him a question, intense and patient, a look that showed he was waiting for the right answer. So George did,

“I’m okay.” He said.

“You are.” Clay reassured, a painfully soft smile slipping across his face.

George returned it with a small smile of his own, and both seemed to relax, their muscles untensing.

Slowly Clay’s hand left the tap and his arm brushed against George before coming to rest at the counter to his side. It was then he froze again and George raised a brow, wondering what he was doing. Despite them being pressed together, he was still nervous about where they stood with touch. But then Clay looked at him questioningly, both hands now resting on the counter, effectively boxing George between his arms without touching him.

Clay’s caution was palpable, and George realized he wasn’t the only one unsure.

So George leaned back, fully resting his back against Clay’s bare chest and allowing his head to fall comfortably on his shoulder. It was his answer, his way of crossing the bridge between them, and as soon as he did this Clay moved. He took his arms off the counter, shaking a bit, and then wrapped them around George’s middle in a comforting embrace.

He paused once again, and George could feel him taking a steadying breath. Once he had exhaled he leaned down and his head found home in the crook of George’s neck. It was oddly sweet how they were both messes in their own right. Seeing Clay be vulnerable with his nervousness made him feel more comfortable with his visible panic.

Warmth bloomed in George’s stomach, feeling his body relax into the hold. It was like being wrapped in a warm blanket, and his eyes shut as he immersed himself in the embrace. He could feel every time Clay took a breath, his chest would rise against his back, and the air from the exhale dusting against the sensitive skin of his neck.

“That tickles.” He said quietly, voice still sounding unsteady.

“Sorry.” Clay replied, not sounding it, more air disrupted his skin and George shivered.

They fell quiet again, ambling in the hug for a good while, soaking each other in.

It was nice, and the longer he stayed in the hold the calmer his heart got. Though his body couldn’t seem to decide if it wanted to feel a rush from the contact or to slow and sink into it. It was an odd

concoction of left over adrenaline, anxiety, affection, and stress. It buzzed through him to a near painful degree. He wasn't sure what to make of it, but he was feeling too much at once. His eyes opened, focus drifting from the hug.

The sink still lay in front of him and as his eyes laid on it he felt the sudden need to be free. The warm and gentle arms around him beginning to feel like restraints, the pressure and hold they had around him becoming more apparent.

"Okay." He sighed, regret lacing through his voice.

As much as he would like to continue and enjoy the moment, his brain was taking him out of it. Regretfully he began to lightly pull away, although he did it slowly, doubting himself.

Clay noticed, pulling his head from George's neck. His rush to shower seemingly forgotten, he took his time pulling his chest away from George's back, one of his hands slipping up and perching on George's shoulder.

Before George could feel anxious at the loss of connection he felt immediately soothed by the hand on his shoulder. Clay was rubbing mindlessly against it even as he broke their contact. The arms absence from around him eased the feeling of restriction, though he still longed for affection.

With a squeeze to George's shoulder Clay fully distanced himself, stepping back and dropping the hand as well.

He examined George again through the mirror.

"You want to talk about it?" He asked hesitantly.

George pulled a face of displeasure. He was still reeling from it all and the idea of having to verbalize any of it winded him.

"No." He stated.

They both stared at each other for a bit, Clay seeming to debate something. George just felt antsy, his hands were clammy and the walls of the bathroom felt like they were closing in. While he appreciated Clay's attentive nature he really just wanted to leave the room.

Finally Clay took a few steps toward the shower, which had remained on through the whole ordeal. George finally had room to comfortably turn and it was as good of an opening he would get, so he did, finally rid of the sight of the sink.

Without much thought, he went to exit the room. Though realizing how odd it would be to leave just like that he stopped, clearing his throat to speak. "I'll be in the living room when you're done." He said, breaking whatever atmosphere had built between them.

For a second there was silence and then Clay broke it.

"Okay," Clay said simply.

Taking that as the end he walked through the door, ready to pull it shut behind him.

"Oh wait!" Clay called out, and George stopped once again. "Uh- George?"

"Hm?" He asked, turning slightly to stare at the other perplexed.

Clay was standing right next to the shower, still shirtless and not yet in the shower, his height made

it look smaller than it was and it amused George. Clay's stare was fixed on him.

Then he spoke, gesturing to the shower, "Thank you." A small smile stretched across his face, and George found himself automatically smiling back.

*No, thank you.* Is what he had wanted to say, but the words wouldn't seem to come.

Everything felt a bit too much for him at the moment, too overwhelmed.

"Don't slip and die in my shower," He said instead, though his voice leaked with something fond. "I really don't want to clean your blood off the tile." He paused, a smirk growing on his face before adding, "It would be a pain."

"Damn okay then." The other smiled back challengingly, "I'll make sure to slip, and bleed out extra long all over your tile."

George smiled bigger. "Fuck you." He said turning back around to leave the bathroom.

"You-"

He shut the door.

---

George had sat for a while, turning on the tv to some action movie. He hadn't really paid attention, instead sitting and listening to the sound of the water run until it faded out.

It was hard to process everything that happened, the rush of adrenaline and the emotions that had been bursting before had mostly receded. He was just left basking in the wake of it all. Allowing his emotions to pass by, and simmer down. His thoughts flowing like water in a peaceful river, he watched them all float by.

Needless to say he had calmed down drastically compared to earlier in the bathroom. Feeling substantially less overwhelmed, now he only looked back on it warmly. Clay had been super understanding.

Distantly he heard the creak of his door and then footsteps. They sounded like they were approaching and he knew that Clay was heading to the couch. But then they stopped.

Curious he tilted his head up to look back, but he was met instantly with the sight of Clay peering over from the back of the couch, a smile on his face.

His heart stuttered.

He realized Clay was probably trying to scare or bother him, get some kind of reaction but he was lost in the sight of the other. There was nothing to stop him from seeing Clay now and he was going to take every opportunity he could to do it.

His smile always brought out the dimple in his cheek, the shine of his eyes. His focus on it was broken when something fell on him, he scrunched his nose. Clay's hair was wet and droplets fell from it and onto George's face, they were cold.

"Did you not fucking towel dry your hair." He asked in disdain.

Clay only continued to stare down at him, smile unfazed. "You only gave me one." He stated simply.

George raised a brow, "Uh yeah?" They shared a look and George just stared perplexed, and then it occurred to him, "Do you not use the same one?"

Clay scowled as he moved around to the front of the couch, George's eyes following him. "That's disgusting George." He sat down. "It's literally insanity."

"You mean unsanitary?" George asked flatly, adjusting himself so he could slightly face the other, fully invested in this conversation.

"No-" Clay's face screwed up in thought. "But that too."

"Whatever Clay." George rolled his eyes. "Didn't know you needed a towel *just* for your shortass hair."

Clay fake gasped, hand pressed against his heart. "George, I come all the way here and you wound me." He said over dramatically.

Seeing this conversation leading nowhere George threw a pillow at the other's chest. "Oh shut up." He turned back to the tv, pretending to care about what was on.

For a while they sat in silence, fixated on the movie, on opposite ends of the couch. Really George was just staring blankly at the flashes of color from the screen. The air felt odd, not awkward although not comfortable. Now that the rush of emotions had left him, he didn't know what to do with himself. Clay seemed a bit off too, he kept glancing over.

George was eying the space between them. He didn't want there to be any, not anymore, there was no need for it. All he could think about was the warmth he felt whenever they touched, he was hooked on it.

He didn't know where to go from here but he decided to take a leap of faith. They weren't going to get anywhere like this.

"Can I?" He trailed off staring at the space between them.

Clay turned his attention from the tv to him. "Can you?" He asked, staring at George with a questioning look.

It was now or never.

"Can I touch you?" He asked bluntly, returning Clay's gaze.

A smirk fell on the other's face, and George already knew what he was about to say. "I don't know, can you?"

*Yep, there it was.*

"Clay." He said annoyed. "I just-" He eyed the space between them again, he really hated having to use his words but he hated the space between them more. "I need to feel you." He admitted.

A teasing smile stretched across Clay's face and George knew some stupid joke was coming. "Wow George dinner firs-"

"Not like that idiot." He interrupted. "Don't be an ass." He paused suddenly feeling a little



embarrassed at the way he phrased that. This was not how he acted naturally but he didn't want to cross any boundaries. His face fell, "Sorry I-"

Clay's smile fell and he scrambled to face the other "No, no, no, fuck George- I was just being an asshole." He said, looking a little frantic. "I'm not very funny."

George felt touched at his concern and also relieved he hadn't made a fool of himself.

"You have your moments." He admitted, smiling softly at Clay.

The other seemed to relax, a smile returning to his face. "Aww." He said and George heard the teasing tone return.

He rushed to shut down whatever Clay had planned to say. "Once in a blue moon." He said.

"Okay yeah." Clay said. "I deserved that one." He shifted on the couch and George was drawn to the movement. "But uh- I would really like it if you could come over here."

That's all he needed to hear. George moved over until their legs were touching. They both turned to sit facing each other, legs crossed and knees touching. The contact between them was invigorating.

They stared at each other for a bit, facing each other, air still unsure.

Then George reached out a hand hesitantly, it was weird wanting to touch and being able to. He didn't have to long for it from the other side of the screen. His hand froze, Clay was right here.

It felt natural, the impulse to reach for him. But to follow through with it? Bridge a gap that had been distancing them for years? Was that okay? He still felt odd about it.

His need outweighed any doubts about it though and he reached out, hand resting on Clay's cheek. He was warm and soft, although his cheek felt softer than earlier, he must've shaved. George felt relieved when Clay didn't make a move to pull away.

But then Clay's eyes dropped to his lips, and George's breath caught as he watched it. He could see the cogs turn in his head, the decision he made. Clay leaned forward, his own hand reaching out.

"Wait." George blurted, Clay froze. "Uh." He stared at the other, surprised by his sudden request. It wasn't that he was nervous just, he swallowed. "Can- Just let me look at you for a while." He voiced in time with his thoughts.

Clay seemed taken aback, eyes snapping up to search his expression questioningly.

George realized it might sound odd so he began to explain. "I still don't feel like this is real, You being here- Right in front of me." He licked his lip examining the other's face. "I can see you." His eyes dragged across his freckles. "*You're* Clay." His hand traced the rise of his cheek, finger dipping just where the bone did to make room for his eyes. Clay leaned into the touch, allowing George to explore. He brushed against his lower lid, the eyelashes there leaving kisses on his finger pad. "I want to take in." George finished.

He could not only see but feel the realization reach the other, his questions melting away with the shut of his eyes. The skin near his eyes was delicate and speckled with the allusion of freckles, George made sure to be gentle as he explored.

"It's real." Clay said, eyes opening fully after George's thumb left his lid, his expression softer than before. "It's me," His tone was firm and reassuring, "I'm right here."

George smiled.

“I know.” He said, he brushed his thumb across both of Clay’s brows, enjoying the scrunch of them as he did so. “It’s funny, I should be thrown off, but it all fits so well.” His thumb stopped at the end of his brow, dragging down his temple and returning to his cheek. “I feel like I’ve seen you the whole time.” He admitted.

The tall blurry man he once daydreamed about slowly coming into clarity as he looked at Clay. All his memories and thoughts of Clay now filled in perfectly with the image of him. All his imperfections and little details, features he would be proud of, things he would feel insecure over, they all fit. All painted the image of Clay, he was perfect.

“You have.” Clay spoke quietly, his voice bleeding honestly, “Seen me. Always have.”

He was right, though never like this.

No longer did he have to hold desperately onto the little snippets of him that he was given, details said in passing he would obsess over, picture so vividly it hurt. He was right in front of him, no more vague images of what all of him would look like, now it was just him. Everything right in front of him with such shocking precision it felt like he had put on glasses. Clay was no longer this fluctuating vision in his head, no longer an enigma of feelings, odd pieces of information, vague impressions of visuals, no,

He was just here.

George smiled. “I guess I have.” He said, his thumb dropping lower.

It ran over Clay’s lips, feeling them not on his own lips was different, he could actually focus on them. They squished underneath the pressure of his finger.

It reminded him of earlier, feeling them against his own, soft like velvet and yet stern, nearly commanding. His heart fluttered as he recalled it. It was one thing for Clay to be here but another for him to return his feelings so, decidedly.

With words but actions as well.

“This still can’t be real.” He whispered, retracting his hand like he was burned, feeling overwhelmed. “My heart is exploding.” He muttered, pressing his other hand against his chest, feeling it beat wildly.

Smoothly Clay’s hand wrapped around his wrist, catching the hand that had left him before it could fall to the couch below them. George looked back up at him, caught off guard.

“You can feel mine.” He said, guiding his hand over to his own heart, wasting no time in pressing George’s hand over it.

Before George could speak he felt it beat, solid and strong, uninterrupted even when his chest expanded with air. He was speechless, in awe of a gesture so simple and yet so sweet. Something about feeling the steady thumping soothed George deeper than anything else.

Clay spoke again, “It’s real.” He pressed the hand more firmly into his chest. “I’m real.” He assured him.

George’s own pounding heart faded in the back of his head, instead occupied by the feel of Clay’s heartbeat. It was intimate, intense in a way he could never have imagined, never felt before.

His heart was fluttering and the feeling was engulfing, almost making him feel similar to drunk or drowsy. Weighed down by the feel of the moment he rested his head on Clay's shoulder, focusing on the rhythm of his heart and relaxing into it. Breaths subconsciously coinciding and joining in a silent song.

He was almost lulled to sleep, falling into a trance, falling into Clay.

But then Clay moved, momentarily shaking George from it. His unoccupied hand came up before George could process.

It rested on George's stomach making his breath catch, and his focus on Clay's heart faltered. He was spinning, dizzy and reeling at the touch. The hand paused for a second, like Clay was waiting for permission. So once he calmed, George relaxed back into his shoulder, trying his best to maintain composure.

And then Clay slid it up to his chest, dragging his hand and leading George's composure with it. He was seeking out his heart. Their hands brushed and Clay pressed against the hand George had still held against his heart. His hand was warm against George's own ice cold fingers.

George was short circuiting.

"Let me?" Clay asked, voice painfully gentle, and like mush George immediately dropped his hand.

Soon Clay's hand took his place, tentatively covering the skin over the beating heart. He adjusted to it, seeming to find the right spot and then pushed more firmly against it, eyes sliding shut and focus painting his features. George had surely ascended, he was dizzy, lightheaded, and his heart was thudding.

And Clay could feel all of it.

Part of him felt weirdly embarrassed, like he had to apologize for feeling so much, feeling so deeply for Clay that his own body screamed it.

Though he supposed it was nothing new, it had for a while, whenever they would call and he could hear Clay's voice through the line. Every breath he took, every fluttering laugh, every beat of his foolish heart, screamed his affection for Clay. Only now, Clay could hear it, he could feel it, and George didn't have to speak a word.

It left him feeling vulnerable in a way he hadn't ever before, at an intensity he couldn't fathom even as he experienced it.

"It really is pounding..." Clay said softly, a smile growing on his face.

George didn't deny it, but it lit a fire on his face, surely flush with it being spoken. Instead of protesting or admitting his embarrassment, he focused back on Clay's heart.

A few seconds of silence hung between them, both seemingly focused before Clay leaned in, breath tickling George's ear and sending him spiraling once more.

George could hear his lips pop open, his mouth so close to his ear, "I make it beat like that?" He asked softly.

George's thoughts halted and he felt weak, sent through a frenzy of emotions. "Yeah," He swallowed, breath trembling. "You drive me crazy." He admitted despite the burning in his face

from speaking it aloud.

There was a moment of pause before Clay spoke, and every second of it had George falling deeper into a haze, then finally he asked,

“Do you think I could make it faster?”

George couldn't help but gasp quietly in the air between them. All the air felt stolen from him.

“You'll kill me.” He responded breathily, feeling impossibly lightheaded, his head was in the clouds. “Clay-”

“Shhh.” Clay soothed, he let the hand he had holding George's in place fall, instead resting it on his shoulder. “Just let me see.” He urged, moving the hand painfully slowly to the junction of his neck and shoulder.

George shivered when he met the skin of his neck, his eyes almost slipping shut. Clay pulled away a bit to come face to face with him, a smirk on his face. George didn't care though, everything was hazy.

Clay's eyes dropped to George's lips, smirk growing. His hand now placed firmly on the back of George's neck. The skin on skin contact was driving him crazy, it seared into his skin, probably leaving a permanent mark.

The look was doing something aggressive to George's mind. “Seriously Clay,” He pleaded, feeling like he was losing himself in the moment. “You'll give me cardiac arrest.” Clay's hand began to trail up his neck and George shuddered, feeling ready to collapse. “That's murder.” He emphasized though knowing it wouldn't stop the other.

Clay leaned in, lips mere centimeters from George. Once aware of the distance he longed for it to close, but he was paralyzed, putty in Clay's hand. He felt absolutely drunk on him.

Clay only smirked wider, expression shifting to something lighter, “At least I'm not the psycho who uses one towel.” He whispered.

*What?*

Then all too sudden he pulled away.

The moment between them was broken and like a fish thrown back into water George snapped into awareness. The haze began to lift and his body set in motion, no longer trapped in those sharp eyes.

“Oh fuck off.” He said, scowling at the fool in front of him.

Clay only laughed, “Your heart rate sped up!” He said excitedly, hand pressing more firmly against George's chest.

“It did not!” George protested, knowing well himself that was a lie.

Done with his bullshit he tried to pull away, leaning back to hopefully avoid Clay's hand from seeking out his lie. But the other only barely tightened his grip on the back of his neck in response, which caused George to freeze in place. The tension before returning full force and winding him.

“Wait, wait!” Clay pleaded as George tried desperately to recoup. “I'm being serious though. If I

kissed you?” He trailed off, lips ghosting over the other once again, he spoke softer, “Would it beat faster?”

George’s heart caught in his throat, and he tried desperately to focus on the words that had come from the other’s mouth, but he couldn’t with their proximity. He was burning all over again, plunged right back into the drunk feeling, forced into it with the idea of Clay’s lips on his.

It was a lot.

George couldn’t deny he liked the attention of the other, thrived off of it even, but he really didn’t enjoy the teasing. His brain was scattered and he couldn’t grasp on to anything, every time he had it felt like Clay was pulling the rug from underneath him, it was almost too much.

There was a stir in his chest as Clay’s grip on his neck tightened.

It was too much.

He stared at the other debating what he should do, how he could calm himself. Then he realized something, Clay’s own heart had been beating faster. It thumped wildly underneath George’s hand, perhaps faster than his own. Since the beginning of this all it was noticeably faster. As much as Clay seemed teasing and aloof, his heart couldn’t lie.

He was feeling the same way.

It brought a wave of smugness to him, Clay wanted this just as much as he did, probably anticipated contact just as much.

A wave of bravery overcame him, “Well there’s only one way to find out.” he said.

Clay didn’t need to be told twice, his lids began to drift shut and he tilted his head, and he leaned in,

It felt like it had been a long time coming, and at the contact George let himself go.

In contrast to Clay’s teasing attitude the kiss itself was tender, done with a certain amount of trepidation. He was slow and precise in his movements, and it prospered a warm and sinking feeling. George sighed into it, any anxiety or anticipation that had been left in him diluting.

They moved slowly in time, nectar dripping between their lips, Clay dragged his hand from around his neck, it was dripping from his fingertips. Sweet and sticky across his skin, drawing attention to it even as Clay’s touch receded. It left a trail from the back of his neck to his cheek where Clay’s hand had stopped.

He pulled only a fraction of an inch away. “Well?” George asked, unable to open his eyes, lost in the wave that was Clay.

He could feel his heart beat rapidly underneath Clay’s palm.

“It’s faster.” Clay deduced, sounding distracted and just as lost.

Unable to resist the pull of his lips George closed the distance again. It felt like kissing gentle daylight, warm and bright. It was becoming highly addictive, the sweet taste of his lips was irresistible. At this point both their hearts were pounding wildly and a smile grew on his face,

He broke the kiss for a second, “We’re in sync.” And then he was diving back in.

His hand removed from Clay's chest instead to wrap an arm around his neck to deepen the kiss. He didn't have to feel Clay's heart anymore when he could just tell from his own.

As they kissed he could feel the tension build again, the itch to be closer, to kiss him harder.

Clay dropped his own hand, slipping both his arms around George and pulling him closer, but their knees met and they couldn't get any closer. Fed up and impatient, George broke this kiss, moving quickly to rest on top of the other's lap.

Clay startled for a second before smiling, hands gripping his sides and guiding- no pulling him to settle in.

With legs on either side of Clay, planted firmly in his lap, George wrapped his arms back around his neck. Bringing them unbelievably closer, chests flush and noses touching. They were eye to eye now, the height difference less prominent, breathing each other in. As much as he liked the difference, he was relieved now as neither had to lean to accommodate the other.

Clay licked his lips and George's eyes followed the movement. "This is much better." He muttered.

George couldn't hold himself back anymore, kissing him again with a new fervor. He was quick with need and desire. It was like breathing in fire, except George wasn't being burned, he was just fueled by the intense smolder.

Clay was kissing him back with just as much fire as he was, hands gripping tightly and desperately at him. Never seeming to have enough. It was scorching, the nectar that had once been between them before had turned to something molten. Every touch was scorching, leaving a path of flames that quickly spread to George's entire body like an uncontained forest fire.

He was getting comfortable in kissing Clay, it started to have a natural ease that George could only compare to something like breathing. They fit together like they were always made to be. He couldn't get enough, and things were only getting more intense.

It was all building, he could barely breathe, barely think, he was only sinking deeper.

Barely able to, he broke away, "This okay?" He asked, trying his best to catch his breath.

Clay's eyes snapped open, he looked dazedly at George, breathing just as hard. "Yeah, fantastic." He panted, leaning in to peck George on the lips before resting their foreheads together. He was so red, pupils blown and lips red. "But I don't think I can take much more of-" He breathed out. "I can't go further- my heart's going crazy." He admitted.

George breathed out a sigh of relief and smiled.

"It's okay- This-" He stopped going in for a slow kiss, dragging his lips painfully slowly against the other, hooked on the feeling before reluctantly pulling away. "Right now is perfect." Clay leaned back in to steal a kiss from him, this one longer than the last, George had to pull away before getting lost in it. "Wasn't planning on taking this further." He said softly.

Clay just kissed him again, slowing the pace down like their lips were moving through molasses. Both of them melted into it, savoring the sweetness captured between their lips, like a special treat only they could have. Things slowed down and so did they, remaining absorbed in each other, relishing in the deep intimacy that was shared between them. Pulling away only to catch their breaths or look at each other.

Eventually the length between the kisses elongated, until they both sat staring into each other's eyes, breathing each other in. Weirdly the air between them was heavy, not in a bad way, just heavy.

George shifted to get off him, hoping to adjust so they could lay on the couch but Clay's arms stopped him.

"Wait-" He said and their eyes met again. "Just stay here- in the moment with me." There was something panicked about the way he spoke. "I don't want it to break just yet."

*Oh.*

He understood, it was hard to imagine going from everything to nothing. Being so close together to being so far. He didn't want to leave the moment either.

George pecked Clay on the nose, hoping to be reassuring. "Okay." He said, moving back to once again.

As he stared at him he couldn't help but think all Clay's features were becoming more familiar to him, it had only been a small amount of time but he felt like he could picture him perfectly in his head. His presence near him was so strong that it couldn't even fade in his imagination.

It all felt so surreal, having Clay fly out to see him, to stay with him. Now here he was wanting to hang on to this one small moment.

"Why?" George asked quietly between them, unsure quite what he was asking about. It could be thousands of things, why had Clay fallen for him, why was it now, why did he want to hang on to this moment, and maybe perhaps all of them.

Clay didn't falter at the vague question, instead smiling painfully soft at him. "I could give you so many reasons why." He said, seeming to understand the vastness of the question. "But we're here now."

George hummed, accepting the answer. He still wasn't even sure what he had been asking, but Clay's response just felt right.

"We should lay down." He said instead of just pulling away this time, but Clay seemed to frown so he quickly added "I want to hold you."

Clay's face softened, "You mean you want to cuddle?" he asked.

George smiled, feeling warm.

"No shit." He replied.

Clay hummed, seeming to play up the fact that he was contemplating the idea. "Well I guess I could let you go." He said, drawing out his words in a playful manner. "But I am *so* comfortable right now."

George rolled his eyes and hit Clay's chest lightly. "You'll be more comfortable in bed, it's late." He emphasized, knowing the other was jetlagged.

Clay just sighed, and slowly the arms around George loosened. For a second he mourned their loss, but then he remembered his drooping eyes, his heavy limbs, and the comfortable bed waiting for the two of them, and he quickly perked up.

He began to shift off Clay, and In an attempt to move his leg over the other's lap he nearly tipped too far over and fell off the couch. He felt himself sway dangerously over, curse on the tip of his tongue, though in instinct he had grabbed on to Clay, and Clay on the same page, had grabbed him as well. Quickly he pulled him by his shirt, away from the 'far' drop to the floor. George stared dazed at the floor, which would have been his demise. They both shifted a bit, unsteady.

"Thanks." He said releasing his death grip on Clay's shirt, feeling confident enough in his balance.

Clay released him, but his eyes pierced through him. "George, did you just try and take me down with you?" His other hand was gripped tightly to the couch as if he was holding on for dear life.

George played through what had happened in his head, he may have displaced Clay quite a bit in his near descent. Perhaps even caused him to slide toward the edge of the couch, nearly tipping them both over.

George looked at Clay and nodded grimly, dead serious as he spoke, "I die, you go down with me." He paused for dramatic effect before adding on, "bitch."

It took a second for Clay to register his words, face confused and then blooming into understanding, then quickly morphing into surprise.

Clay wheezed, "What?"

George lips curled into a smile, feeling the rush of making Clay laugh. "Did I fucking stutter?" He replied.

George let him laugh as he climbed off his lap, making sure not to kill them both in the process. Though he was tired and may have done so quite ungracefully. he pretended not to notice Clay laugh louder when he unintentionally slid off the couch and to the floor.

Finally he stood, using the couch cushion as leverage, he was a bit unsteady but he grounded himself. Clay was half laying half sitting, looking as comfortable as ever while he had been struggling. George wanted to punt him across the room. He was looking smug, face flushed with laughter and eyes dancing in mirth at George's struggle, but at least he had stopped laughing.

"Let's move to the bed." He said instead of acting out his thoughts, he was feeling drowsiness really begin to set in and didn't think he'd be able to punt a six foot man across his living room. Though an unhelpful part of his brain helpfully supplied that he didn't know until he tried. He eyed Clay longingly, beginning to imagine the sight it would be.

Probably feeling George plan his oncoming demise, Clay quickly stood.

*Yeah, definitely too tall to punt.*

Probably best George hadn't tried.

When he stood in full beside George, his arm wrapped around George's middle and planted a kiss on the top of his head. The smoothness of it all made George's heart melt and his scheming take a backseat of his mind. This was something he could get used to.

"Okay let's go." Clay said softly and George didn't need to be told twice.

Slowly they made it into his room, both struggling with walking from their prolonged position on the couch. Though Clay kept his arm around George as a guide as they entered his room safely. It was nice to have a constant line of contact between them, even as they hobbled their way into the



room. George practically deflated at the sight of his bed, and Clay was his only support, *god he was so tired.*

When they got close to the bed he halted, gears turning rapidly in his head. Sleep deprivation and the leftover concoction of emotions provided by the day, had begun fueling his delirious brain.

He couldn't punt a six foot man but could he-

Without a second thought he grabbed the arm around his waist, using the last bit of his strength to yank closer Clay to him. The other sputtered as he tottered around on his feet, thrown off by George's strength.

Cute lanky fucker, George thought. Amused by how easy it was to catch him off guard.

Not wanting to waste the element of surprise, he took both hands and shoved Clay back with all his might. His muscles protested with the force, unused to him trying to topple a person, let alone a six foot one.

Nothing could compare to watching Clay begin to fall, his mouth dropping open and a strangled noise leaving it. George smiled, feeling happiness radiate even in the deepest crevices of his soul, there was a deep satisfaction found in pushing someone over.

Though his victory was short lived, existing in only a split second, as the next thing he knew Clay grabbed onto him. Then he was being yanked down with him, so quickly it only allowed a second of confusion. His triumph turned to shock, and then acceptance as he plummeted with Clay. He reached out to try and catch himself, both of them falling on the bed in a heap of limbs.

"George!" Clay shouted, trying to sound exasperated despite the fact that he was smiling from his place strewn on the bed.

"Oops." George said flatly, turning around so he wasn't lying uncomfortably on his arms. "Looks like I killed us."

Clay only laughed, George letting out one of his own.

For a second he enjoyed laying on his back, staring up at his blank ceiling and absorbing the peace that came with it. He was so tired and finally being able to lay down was a relief. Clay's laugh was super nice and set a great backdrop to it as well, he wished he could always hear it. He breathed in deeply, wishing to relax in the moment forever.

"What the fuck was that?" Clay questioned, probably hung up on the fact that he had just gotten bodied by a 5'8 king.

George ignored him for a second, he really wasn't concerned with it, nothing could shake the pure tranquility he felt. As much as he wanted to respond to Clay, the second his body had touched the bed drowsiness hit him like a truck. So he slowly turned over to clamber up on his bed, seeking a more comfortable sleeping spot. The blankets were teasingly soft underneath his hands and he wanted nothing more to snuggle up in them and relax further, Clay be damned.

Then Clay, because he somehow knew he was being ignored despite it being .1 seconds, spoke again, "Geo-"

"Sorry," George interrupted, eager to shut him up and finally at the proper position in the bed, he collapsed down with immediate relief. "George can't come to the phone right now." He explained, pulling up the covers and slipping underneath in one fluid movement.

It was an immediate rush of serotonin as he settled into his plush mattress, it was memory foam, but the good kind. Every time he went to bed he would pat himself on the back for the purchase, it was one of the few things he allowed himself to splurge on, and he hadn't regretted it. Who wouldn't want to sleep on a fucking cloud, only plebs.

There was a noise of distaste, and he was brought back into the present.

He looked at Clay who was frowning at him, propped up on his forearms. "Can't come to the phone right now?" He asked beginning to shuffle up the bed, probably jealous of the fucking euphoria George was currently experiencing. He held the blanket up for him, feeling courteous. "What does that even mean?" He questioned, finally settling under the duvet with George.

George lowered the blanket. The bed dipped where Clay lay next to him, it was different having it not be level, but not a bad kind of different. The warmth and presence of the other was like gravity, it pulled him closer, and he wasted no time snuggling closer to Clay. He was so *warm*.

If he was comfortable before, now the levels were off the chart, truly incomprehensible.

"Means you're shit outta luck." He said, turning on his side and resting face to face on the pillow with Clay. He enjoyed looking at him, it was quickly becoming one of his favorite past times.

Clay laughed softly, his dimple making a reappearance, "You sound drunk." He stated.

George only hummed.

*Yeah he was fucking tired and a little delirious.*

But he didn't say that out loud.

"Just drunk on you." He admired, without much thought.

Contrary to the reaction he would expect, Clay's entire face scrunched. It looked like he had swallowed twenty lemons, and it was almost comical how over exaggerated the expression was. He was definitely going to get wrinkles early on if he had such extreme reactions to George's love. *Bummer.*

"That was awful." He criticized, though despite his seeming distaste, he threw an arm around George.

The weight of the arm was soothing, and it fit comfortably in the space at the end of his ribs. He had only ever dreamed of hugging Clay, and now that it was his reality he wasn't going to waste any time. So, George moved a little closer, feeling more happy chemicals at the contact.

"What?" He asked, his hand coming up to caress the arm over him, he didn't want it to go. "That was smooth." He protested, staring at the goosebumps that were forming on the arm where their skin met. "What was wrong with it?"

Clay seemed to ponder this, so George took the time to watch the arm in fascination. The goosebumps that followed in his wake were prominent, and honestly really adorable. He curled his hand a bit and allowed his nails to slowly and softly drag against the skin, in response Clay shivered, eyes snapping up to look at George.

"It's too not you." He said quietly, and then much softer, "That's really nice."

George looked up from the arm and at Clay, frowning at him. Though he didn't stop in his

movement.

*What the fuck did that even mean?*

“That’s a shitty excuse, it literally makes no sense.” He argued.

“No, I mean like.” Clay scooted closer, and George halted in his movements, his hand now resting all the way up to Clay’s shoulder. “It’s not personal to the person, just a cheap throw away line.”

His hand trailed from the other’s shoulder down to his bicep, and back up again. He moved it slowly, watching closely as every time he got closer to certain spots Clay relaxed further. He formed a pattern based on it, a soft smile blooming on his face as he watched the other sink into the touch.

“A cheap line huh?” George questioned, though his voice was warm with the slow burn of happiness. “You’re always saying shit like that, don’t act like you can do any better.”

“I can.” Clay said seriously, though his eyes were drooping and blissed out in relaxation.

George raised a brow, inviting the other to continue. “I’m listening.”

Clay ever competitive smiled, expression shifting to one of excitement and looking less like he was somewhere far off.

“Well first of all,” He said, smile only growing by the second. “It has to come from the heart.” He poked George in the chest for emphasis and George recoiled a bit at the jab, stopping his soothing movements.

Instead of continuing, he swatted the hand away and made a fake gagging noise. He didn’t know he had just signed up for some disney bullshit. Of course Clay only laughed.

“That’s some cheesy bullshit.” George mumbled.

Clay readjusted, pulling himself even closer to George. “No- George listen.” He said eagerly.

George stared at him blankly, doing his best to push down the urge to smile at him. “I am.” He said.

“Okay.” Clay shifted again, the arm around George tightening. “Now look at me.” Clay grasped his chin, moving his face to look at him.

George blinked in surprise, thrown aback by the energy and boldness. Clay’s touch was startling, sending a shock in him that had him feeling more awake.

“I don’t see how this is necessary.” George whispered in the space between them.

“Shut up, it’s for impact.” Clay responded, thumb brushing softly against George’s chin.

They stared at each other for a bit, locked on to each other in a way that left George feeling breathless. He couldn’t think of anything else, but Clay. He waited for him to speak, to say something, but instead he was just staring. George watched back, seeing the teasing in the other slowly fade away into something more. The air around them shifting from one lighthearted to something serious, and then finally he spoke,

“It feels like all my life I’ve been tense.” He admitted, voice breaking with sudden honesty that had George winded. “But meeting you…” He trailed off, eyes glancing to the side like he was too

embarrassed to look him in the eyes. "Being with you I can finally relax." He finished, looking back at George.

*Well shit.*

There was that flush again, peaking around Clay's freckles like moss in the cracks of bark. It was brilliant to watch grow, expanding on his face with its beautiful pink glow. He knew his own face had to be red, feeling the familiar odd tight feeling just beneath the skin.

George's heart stuttered. "Oh." He murmured. The words were whirling around in his head like a washing machine, his blush only growing the longer they stuck around. "I guess that works."

Clay smiled, eyes scanning his face. "You guess?" he questioned, leaning in until their lips were just a breath away. "Baby, you're blushing."

The words and touch of the other were enchanting. He felt like he was dreaming, he was far too tranquil to be conscious, though he knew he was awake. It was if he was indulging himself in something far too good to be true. Like a child sneaking off to consume copious amounts of candy, he waited for the stomach ache, the consequence that came with such indulgence, but it never came. Even though his high of euphoria had faded, he was left with a steady warm happiness. Not an explosion of it, but a hearth, consistent and reliable.

So he didn't stumble back in fear of being burned, didn't halt the overindulgence of candy. He embraced it, cherished the moment and the feeling. Giving himself up to it and its whims. So maybe that's why he didn't feel embarrassment, didn't hesitate in latching on to this.

"Do it again." He insisted, on pure impulse.

"Again?" Clay asked, laughing. He was visibly amused, flustered as well. Though George still didn't feel embarrassed for asking and he didn't take it back. "Okay." Clay accepted. "Give me a second."

Clay's eyes swept over George, seeming to be lost in thought he began to hum. His hand was mindlessly tapping little beats against George's chin. The more he thought the louder his humming got, George wondered if it somehow helped him. Directed some of his unused energy elsewhere so he could hone in on his thoughts. He did it a lot, it was endearing.

Deciding to join in, George hummed the speedrun music at him, breaking into giggles at his own dumb joke. Clay only smiled, snapping out of his thoughts and nudging at him affectionately with his foot.

"Okay I got it. You ready?" He questioned.

George only nodded, smile large and giddy.

Clay leaned in close, once again leaving their lips a breath away. "George, I'm so captured by you." He said, and George felt the butterflies immediately flood his stomach.

"Yeah?" He questioned coyly.

Clay hummed in agreement, "Yeah, I can barely breathe. I feel trapped by you, your scent-" His hand reached up to caress his cheek, featherlight. George felt a shiver erupt from his back and he captured Clay's hand in his own hand, wanting it to stay. "Your touch." Clay said, emphasizing with the slow drag of his fingers underneath George's, his breath caught. "Your presence." He whispered.

“Clay-” George tried, unsure of what he was going to say.

Clay’s finger fell over his lips, shushing him.

“You overwhelm me George.” His eyes shone bright, face so serious and expression so pure. “You always have but now- I see you in everything, I am surrounded by you.” He caught his eyes, entranced, “And you want to know the scariest part?” George could only nod, totally captured in the moment. “All I want to do is fall further, until everything is you.” Clay swallowed thickly. “And I- I don’t know, I’m scared I’m already falling.” He admitted.

George stared at him, taking in his open expression. He was biting his lip, eyes shining with fear and sincerity, flush all the way down to his neck. George licked his lips, voice brave and unabashed as he said,

“Then I’ll catch you.”

## Chapter End Notes

Please i am breaking up inside... I am sufferinggggggggg. I literally peaked as a writer with that heart holding bullshit, like that shit made me emotional.

Anyway, scream at me in the comments, it fuels me. And if u wanna be friends hmu!!!!!! To those who have stuck w me this long i am so sorry and also thank u sm.

Also lol, as pointed out in a comment last chapter, George did leave his phone on the pavement ig. sounds like a him problem so i ain't gonna fix it :D

## Time: Final

### Chapter Notes

Soo while writing this I realized that someone with protan color blindness wouldn't see blush. So I checked it (researched) and they do have an incredibly hard time seeing blush. I was reading through a reddit thing about it and most said they can't tell at all. Even have trouble seeing bad sunburns.... So Ig head canon that Clay do be out here literally turning red like a whole ass lobster man. He better get that checked :/

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Darkness surrounded him, it brushed against his skin, rested in the spaces made by him and the blanket, settled in the nooks and crannies created between him and Clay. As he inhaled and exhaled it pulled at his mind, guiding him gently to sleep. Soon enough he was lost in the world of unconsciousness.

Every time his mind would wander from sleep, and peak into consciousness he would be lulled back. Comforted by the heat of the body wrapped around his, Clay's own breathing guiding his along. Sometimes in his sleep he would lose hold on the other, drawn apart by their shifting, but George would wake to Clay pulling him back. Half conscious he would adjust, wrapping his arms back around him and immediately drifting off.

Soon enough slivers of golden light slipped through the cracks of his blinds, treading gently throughout the room, and as the sun rose, crawling to the bed. Slowly George came to, brain whirring back to the present. The first thing he noticed was he was warm, the second was the satisfying pressure of a body against him, and the last was the breath fanning across the top of his head.

His nose was pressed to Clay's neck and it was a little hard to breathe, so he moved, slowly pulling himself away from Clay in fear he might wake him. He couldn't remember falling asleep, but he knew they had snuggled up to each other, whispering about random things as they both dozed off. There was something so satisfying about falling asleep with Clay just like they had on calls, but this time waking up right next to him.

As he fully pulled away he got a view of the other, wanting to check on him, but he noticed his eyes were open already. He looked relaxed, his face was slack in the early morning rays. George hadn't expected him to be awake this early, assuming he would be jet lagged. They stared at each other for a bit, George taking in the sight of golden light lining Clay's face, highlighting his features, before he finally broke the silence,

"Hey." He said softly, worried anything louder would startle the other, and the pretty light on his face would shift away.

But Clay just smiled back at him lazily, his eyes crinkled softly and white teeth peeked from between his lips. "Hi, you're finally awake." He said, oblivious to the light that now framed his gorgeous smile.

George hummed softly still feeling drowsy, his words slurred. "Sorry, I hope you weren't awake for long."

"Mmm nope." Clay's hand found George's and settled atop it. "You should come back though, you were warm."

It seemed like the rays of the sun had settled in George's heart, as his chest glowed with Clay's request. He didn't have to be convinced to return to cuddling and he shifted closer.

"What time is it?" He asked, already moving back into Clay's open arms. He leaned heavily on the other, burying his head just below his chin and wrapping his arms tightly around him. Clay adjusted a bit to find a more comfortable spot, and once they fit together, holding each other snugly they both sighed, relaxing into each other.

"Doesn't matter." Clay reassured.

They laid like that for a while, wrapped up in each other. The atmosphere was light and warm, and George was almost lulled back to sleep by the soothing feeling of Clay breathing. He began to drift, lose himself in the comfort of the room, of Clay's embrace. But then he felt him tense against him and quickly woke.

Curious, George looked up at him, leaning back to see his face. Clay was already staring at him back as he seemed to do often, though this time he was staring right through him. It took George a second to place the expression, still drowsy and brain slowed, but he knew that look. It was the expression of someone lost in thought. He could feel Clay thinking, lost somewhere George couldn't reach, somewhere he couldn't see.

It was weird to see in person, rather than experience in the quiet lull of a call. Clay was somewhere far off, and his presence just out of reach. George could stretch his fingers as far as he wanted, but Clay would escape his grasp. Though he couldn't know what he was thinking, Clay was tense, and it was clear that wherever his mind was at, wasn't good.

George waited, observing Clay with baited breath. Part of him hoped Clay would feel his stare and emerge from the thoughts running through his head, though he knew if he was gone it wouldn't work like that. Mindlessly he began to rub at Clay's shoulder, soothing and steady, trying to be as gentle as possible. When the other still didn't snap out of it he spoke,

"Hey." He said softly, watching as Clay seemed to snap into the present, eyes coming to focus on his own with clarity that hadn't been present before. "Where'd you go?"

Clay sighed, expression seeming to melt into something melancholy. "Sorry." He apologized, voice soft and tone something George didn't like.

"Don't, it's okay." George soothed, his hand coming up to brush against Clay's cheek. "What's bothering you?" He asked.

Clay seemed to hesitate, confliction clouding his eyes and lips pressed tight. George only waited, gaze persistent but patient.

"George- Are we." Clay frowned, and George watched him struggle with forcing the words out. "Are we dating?"

George blinked in surprise, unsure if he heard properly. He had thought it would be quite obvious with them both confessing, but Clay always had been an overthinker.

He looked first at the arm Clay had around him, their intertwined legs, then to the hand he had rested on Clay's cheek, before finally back at his eyes, raising a brow. "Really?" he questioned in disbelief.

"What." Clay asked, and George raised his brow further. "It's a valid question!" He protested.

"Okay, yeah." George agreed, feeling the nervous energy buzzing from the other, it was definitely something he was anxious about. He leaned in, forehead resting on Clay's, hoping to express some of what he was feeling. "Of course we're dating." He comforted.

Clay relaxed a little at his words, worried thoughts probably dissipating after being faced with a solid answer. Hesitantly he smiled, face gorgeous and flush in the golden light and George's heart warmed at the expression. Clay's eyes flickered to his lips and back up.

"So, you're my boyfriend?" He asked, teasing lilt to his voice, though there was still some uncertainty in it.

The question was meant to be flirty, there was no doubt in George's mind about it. Except Clay's eyes kept moving from side to side, like he couldn't pick a place to look. And George could feel Clay rolling one of his ankles in a repetitive motion, he was fidgeting. It didn't seem to just be his usual need to move, but rather he seemed to have a nervous energy prompting him to fidget. It was clear he was flustered.

George wished he could reassure him, speak beauty into his words like Clay had done for him the night prior. Clay had built all his sentences with love that would ooze from every word, leak from his lips and permeate George's heart. George longed to do that, but it didn't come to him naturally, never had. There was always a barrier, one he couldn't break, no matter how much he wanted. He simply wasn't meant for it.

But he had one thing, a way that he could utilize now that they were together. His actions.

George hummed, fingers brushing circles on Clay's cheek. His other hand rose and rested on him, thumbs brushing against the smooth skin below.

"I guess you could say that." He answered, voice teasing.

But his touch was serious, weighed with care and unfiltered emotion. He used his thumbs to paint invisible lines on Clay's cheek bones. Clay built his words with love, but George infused his touch with it. Every surface he brushed against was tainted by it, like water color touching a page, it would bloom. Spreading out from where they had made contact like a gorgeous pigment, soft and delicate marks left in his wake.

"You guess?" Clay murmured, sinking into his touch and fidgeting beginning to subside.

He wanted to kiss him, to show him, but he paused. This was Clay, he didn't want to make him overthink more, so he decided to be blunt. He looked him straight in the eyes, determination flooding him and intent clear in his mind.

"You're my ten Clay." He stated, slowly and surely, hands cradling his face snugly.

Clay stopped all fidgeting, eyes widening and lips falling open in gentle shock. George felt the pull, his undeniable attraction towards the other magnetic and he leaned forward. Eyes fluttering shut before closing the gap between them.

Then he was kissing him, lips gently resting on the other, slow and delicate. He didn't want to



shock him, so he kept his movements confident and slow. Soon Clay seemed to come to life, arms tightening around George and pulling him in. They moved their lips together in a dance only they knew, fully captured with one another.

He wanted to show him he loved him, to let Clay indulge himself in the feeling of being loved, so he guided the kiss. Began to move with precision and intent, but before they could get into it a shrill sound erupted through the air.

A ringing noise.

George broke apart, brows furrowing as he heard the tone. It was undeniably a ringing phone, piercing and annoying, though it wasn't his ring tone. The sound came from behind him, it was close so George figured it must be on the bedside table.

Then he realized it must've been Clay's.

"Your phone is ringing?" He stated a bit uncertainly, raising a brow at Clay who's eyes had not left his.

Rather than respond Clay only wrapped an arm around him, turning to lie on his back as he pulled George over and on top of him. George let out a noise of shock as he came to lay on top of him, vaguely worried about crushing him.

Clay didn't seem to mind though, he wrapped his arms around George tighter than before.

"Let it ring." He said simply.

And before George could protest they were kissing again, and like magic the ringing faded into background noise. He was once again captured in Clay, like the moment between them had never been broken.

This time George wasted no time in pouring all of himself in it, kissing Clay with such care. He cradled his face in his hands like he was the world, captured his lips between his own like they were a treasure to be cherished but not kept.

His love was watercolor and Clay was his canvas. With every inch of his being he loved, painting the gorgeous image of his feelings on Clay's skin, over his lips where they met, his chest where he pressed against, his legs where they had intertwined. He knew he couldn't see colors the way others could, but he knew the ones he left on Clay's skin would be vibrant and rich, saturated with his emotions, gorgeous.

Clay's hands trailed up George's waist, dragging against the skin with hot pressure that had him shuddering. George shifted up, breaking the kiss for a second. "George." Clay whined, breath hot and heavy on the other's lips.

George ignored him, resting his forearms on the pillow on either side of Clay's face to gain more support. As he was leaning back down to reconnect their lips, Clay surged up, meeting him first. He was direct and impatient and it caught him off guard, but soon enough George was melting back into it.

And then there was the shrill ringing again, ripping violently through the air and making George falter in his movements.

Quickly George pulled away and Clay groaned in protest, head falling back dramatically on the pillow. "Whyyyyy, George!" He complained loudly, sounding genuinely annoyed.

“It keeps ringing!” George laughed, watching as Clay frowned up at him. “It could be important Clay.”

George turned his head, finally able to see the phone in question. The screen was lit up and the whole thing trembled violently as it buzzed on the top of the bedside table. It was probably the same caller from earlier, though he couldn’t identify who it was from the angle.

Clay groaned again, hands fisting in George’s shirt at his sides. “Kissing my boyfriend is important!” He insisted.

Before George could say anything about picking up the call the room went quiet again.

“Finally, it stopped.” Clay said, already trying to lean up and capture George’s lips.

“Wait.” George replied, and Clay stopped “Just give it a second, I really don’t want to be interrupted again.”

“Plea-”

“Shhhhh!” George shushed him, covering his mouth with his hand.

Both of them stared at each other, waiting with baited breath as the silence stretched on. Clay stuck his tongue out, licking his hand and George pulled away in disgust, wiping his palm on Clay’s shirt. He only looked smug as the silence grew longer, undisrupted by ringing. After about a minute had passed, Clay’s eyes darted to the phone, and when it remained silent they snapped back. Whoever it was must be done calling and they both seemed to come to the conclusion at the same time.

“They’re done.” Clay said, eyes glinting with mischievousness as he smirked up at George. “You know what that means?”

George felt his heart beat wildly as the look was directed right at him, he felt like he was burning under the gaze. Clay was up to something, and George could see the plan forming in the other’s head from the growing smirk and twinkle in his eyes.

He was up to no good.

“Don’t-” George started but it was to no avail.

Clay gripped George tight, knocking the wind out of him. Before George could blink Clay was violently turning, heaving George along with him.

“Clay!” He protested as he was flipped and practically body slammed into the bed.

Clay was wheezing, laughter spilling from his mouth as George was pinned below him. Clay sat straddling him triumphantly, hands pressing down on his shoulders and keeping George’s arms trapped between his legs. Before he could even try and fight back, Clay’s hands were traveling up his sides, jabbing into them. George shouted, laughter bubbling out from his mouth as he was tickled.

“Clay plea- Stop!” He shouted between wheezes, he desperately tried to free his arms, violently wiggling to get them free.

Clay only laughed, relentless in his attack. “No can do Georgie, this is what you get for-” His words were cut off with a shout of his own as George released an arm and jabbed him in the side.

Clay tried to grab his wrist, but George was able to get a few more attacks in before he succeeded. He held it tightly in his grip and ceased in his tickling. "I'll stop, I'll stop!" He pleaded and George relaxed a bit.

Clay reluctantly dropped his arm.

"You're going to crush me!" He said as he tried to catch his breath, wiggling his other arm out and to freedom.

Clay only laughed, "Shut up." He snapped playfully, and just before George had caught his breath, Clay's lips were crashing against his.

Clay's kisses were aggressive and playful, lips moving roughly together. They pulled apart and crashed together, like waves on the shore, leaving George to gasp heavily for breath. In an attempt to find purchase George's hands came up to twist into Clay's hair, gripping onto it like it would save him from drowning. Though this only seemed to drive Clay forward, he moved from propping himself up, to resting fully on top of George.

George gasped against his lips as Clay laid his weight on top of him, feeling like he was burning with no escape in sight.

"You're trapped now." Clay mumbled, his half lidded eyes the last thing George saw before he was being kissed again.

His lips burned with the contact, everywhere Clay touched was, and he was left reeling. His breath was long since gone, and instead his lungs filled with scorching fire. Every gasping breath was filling them more, warming him and sending his head into a frenzy. And Clay remained like the ocean, crashing against him and pulling him in. Clay broke away, snapping George out of his daze for a second before the next thing he knew there were lips on his neck. George shuddered, fingers knotting almost violently into Clay's hair as he gasped at the contact.

In contrast to the kisses against his lips, Clay kissed his neck slowly, trailing them up with painful patience. The tender and loving way he left opened mouth kisses against his skin gave George whiplash. Each one with more pressure and care than the last, it filled George's heart with the same fire that was in his lungs.

George pulled at Clay's hair impatiently, and the second his lips were once again hovering over his George pulled him in. He took charge this time, kissing Clay long and slow. He was buzzing with affection and crushing love for the other, it thrummed under his skin and left him trembling.

As he kissed him his hands slipped from his hair to cup Clay's face, holding it in place as he pulled away and began to pepper kisses around it. He wanted to kiss over every freckle, over Clay's dimple, the crooked bridge of his nose, everything he had ever seen as a flaw George wanted to paint with his love. So he did, he wanted him to remember his lips on his skin every time he thought of his insecurities. He wanted to overwhelm him with so much love that the hate wouldn't have room to exist anymore.

When he was done he returned to Clay's lips, allowing himself to dissolve in their soft touch, their sweet taste. Clay's arms wrapped around his neck, the soft fibers of his shirt sleeves tickling George's sensitive skin. All he could think about was his love for him, the way their hearts beat in time with each other, his overwhelming presence tha-

The phone rang again, shattering the moment between them and ripping away all focus George once had.

Clay ripped away from the kiss, mouth open in shock “What the fuck.” He said, looking incredulously at his phone.

George blinked in surprise, brain catching up with everything that had just happened. No longer trapped in the bubble they had created and instead focused on one of the default iphone ringtones. Of course the phone would have rung again at that moment.

Clay groaned as the ringing persisted, face red and jaw clenched, seeming about ready to scream in frustration. It was all George needed to see before a small chuckle escaped his lips.

“Please-” Clay looked down at him in betrayal at his amusement, and it sent George further off the edge. “Just answer the phone!” He laughed.

Clay frowned down at him with something close to disappointment in his eyes. “George it’s not funny.” He protested.

George laughed a little harder.

“Your fucking- your face!” He giggled, gasping to catch his breath.

“I hate you.” Clay muttered, a smile of his own stretching across his face. George raised a brow at him, and Clay melted. “Okay fine, it’s a little funny.” He chuckled.

Clay sighed, half rolling off of George as he continued to laugh. His long arm was able to reach out to the bedside table, hand slapping down on it and fumbling for the offender. All done quite aggressively, his annoyance was tangible.

“I am killing whoever this is-” He stopped when he brought the phone back staring at the screen.

“What?” George asked, finally calming down from his laughter.

Clay flipped the phone over, showing the screen, and thus the lovely contact calling him.

*Sapnap.*

And the four words of explanation that followed this reveal sent George,

“I didn’t tell him.” Clay said, sounding horrified.

Almost immediately George slapped a hand against his mouth, muffling the violent laughter spilling from his lips.

He didn’t know if that meant their relationship, them getting together, their meeting, or all of the above. All that he knew was that it spelled out Clay’s demise and that in itself was funny. That added with the repeated calling spoke volumes of how bad the situation was.

“Speaker.” He spat out lamely between muffled laughter.

Surprisingly Clay was laughing too, though it was quiet and nervous, with an edge that made it sound a bit manic. George didn’t blame him though, if this was about to go as well as he thought it would, Clay was about to get ripped a new one. Clay seemed to think so as well as regret colored his once happy expression. The more Clay seemed to live with the idea of his demise the more hysteric he got.

“I’m dead.” He breathed through sharp laughter, phone gripped tightly in his hand.

“We need to stop- stop laughing.” George wheezed, hand slapping uselessly against Clay’s shoulder.

He was really trying to stop, in hopes that then one of them would make a move to answer the call. Just as he began to calm, hand reaching for the phone in Clay’s desperate grasp,

The call ended.

Clay’s eyes snapped to George, looking both scandalized and fearful all at once.

“I am so fucked.” He laughed desperately, verging on sounding insane.

George popped a fucking lung, squirming violently underneath him. He was full blown cackling at this point, lungs struggling and sides burning from the exertion. George could feel Clay’s own laughter, vibrating through him not unlike the ringing of the phone that started once again.

Clay pressed his hand to his mouth and breathed deep, forcibly stopping his laughter. George wanted to as well, but he was lost in it, unable to stop.

“George, George, stop it. It’s not that funny.” Clay said despite the smile on his face and the trembling in his body from suppressed laughter.

He knew it wasn’t that funny, but he was high off of the moment.

“I can’t- I am sorry! Just-” George dug his hands into his shirt, willing the laughter to stop.

“Answer the fucking phone Clay! You’re going to-” He wheezed, face twisted in pure amusement.

“You’ll miss it *again* .” He whispered through breathless lungs.

“I’ll answer.” Clay said, finger hovering over the accept call button. “Just shut up!”

George shut his mouth, suppressed laughter shaking his body as he tried to breathe through it. Slowly he stopped laughing, instead silent laughter shook him, only his heavy breathing giving away his amusement. Both of them were a bit out of breath.

With a deep breath Clay picked up the phone and put it on speaker as requested. He opened his mouth, voice rough and unsteady from laughter,

“Hell-”

“DUDE!” Nick’s voice exploded over the speaker and Clay looked horrified, mouth audibly snapping shut. George’s body shuddered, laughter trying to rip itself desperately from him, clawing aggressively at him, but he withstood it.

“Why the fuck weren’t you answering?!?!” Nick shouted, not missing a beat. “It’s been hours since I last heard from you. Yeah *hours*, remember when you were fucking freaking out in a bathroom?” George looked at Clay questioningly but the other put a hand to his face, playfully pushing him away. “Did you die on the plane or what?!”

A giggle escaped George and he swatted Clay’s hand away. Clay stared at the phone blankly, seemingly frozen. George pushed his shoulder to snap him out of it the same time Nick spoke,

“Hellllo?!?!! Bitch I am talking to you, you dead?”

Clay seemed to come back to life, mouth opening and closing with indecision before he finally spoke,

“Uh-” he stuttered, breaking the silence. A smile fell across his face and his breath was heavy with laughter. “Hey- sorry uh.” He paused body curling like he was going to laugh, but instead he just breathed in sharply.

“Oh shit, why are you breathing like that?! You actually fucking dying?” Nick asked rapidly, causing both Clay and George to laugh.

“No Nick I-” A laugh escaped George and it spurred Clay into his own, which he disguised as a heavy inhale.

“Well you’re breathing pretty fucking heavy in the speaker dude, kind of nasty. You running or some shit?!” Nick interrogated and George exhaled sharply, hands fisted in Clay’s shirt in an attempt to muster all strength not to laugh.

“No!” Clay protested, he looked at George incredulously. “Why did both of you think I was running?”

Before George could reply, Nick spoke,

“Wait, both?” There was a pause on the line, and both Clay and George shared a look. “Did you meet up with George?!?” He shouted louder than before causing both to startle, the volume making the audio crack.

Clay sputtered, “Uh, yeah?”

Silence surrounded them and it was in contrast to the explosion of Nick’s voice just second prior. George saw Clay begin to fidget with his empty hand, opening and closing it and drumming his fingers on the bed. Meanwhile George was still struggling to contain his laughter. Then finally Nick spoke again,

“Oh.” There was another pregnant pause. “So...” He trailed off, while George desperately wished he could see his face. “If you’re- OH my god! Did I interrupt something?!” Nick asked, sounding absolutely scandalized.

Clay’s face twisted the second the words left his phone’s speaker, blush spreading like wildfire across his skin. George knew he wasn’t going to respond anytime soon, so he leaned toward the phone and answered for him,

“No, not really.” He replied flatly.

There was a loud gasp over the other end of the line in perfect time with Clay’s head snapping toward George. He had covered his mouth, though George knew behind his hand was a smile stretching across his face.

“WHAT-” Then there was a loud thud and both Clay and George winced. “GEORGE!”

Clay wheezed and it tipped George over the edge. He gasped, choking on his laughter, as Clay giggled, sounding like a parrot. Nick had sounded surprised, mad, and happy all at once and George had no idea how he had done it, but all he knew was that it was funny.

“Wait, wait, wait. You’re together right now?” Nick asked, ignoring the laughter.

They shared a look, Clay smiling goofily at him, and George returning it in full. Without much thought his hand found Clay’s and their finger intertwined.

“Yeah.” Clay answered, a smile so big that it could be heard through his voice.

“And also, *together?*”

Clay squeezed his hand, grip firm and reassuring, George squeezed back. Love and affection surged through him. They were together, something he hadn’t imagined happening in a billion years.

“Yeah.” George said softly, fondness leaking from his voice.

Having said out loud they were together set in place a sense of reality, provided a comforting weight to the whole situation.

Clay’s smile widened, and he brought up George’s hand, pressing a kiss softly onto it. It felt like fireflies fluttered from his stomach, drifting just beneath his skin and setting it ablaze. He was warm with his affection for Clay, entranced by him and his every action. He tugged on the hand, Clay was sitting, leaning against him as he lay and it was too far.

“Wait so did you-”

The warmth grew exponentially, and without much control he mouthed ‘kiss me’ to Clay.

His face flushed. “Okay, I promise I will call you in a bit and explain everything, but I gotta go. Bye.” Clay hurried, ending the call.

He muted his phone and shoved it away, throwing himself down on the bed to embrace George. George immediately pulled him in, their arms finding their way in the hug. They both smiled at each other, and his arms wound tighter around Clay.

“So he knows.” George said, breaking the silence between them.

Clay chuckled, eyes crinkling and revealing delicate laughter lines which had George’s heart fluttering. “He knows.”

George fidgeted with Clay’s shirt, tracing random lines onto the fabric just over his heart. He had never felt happier in his life, never felt more content. There was the relief of having made up with his best friend, then the joy that came with meeting him for the first time, and finally the satisfaction in having his feelings returned. Though it had been less than a day together it felt like it had been ages, like Clay had been with him the whole time.

The night of the fight he had been sure their friendship had snapped, shattered into pieces, and it had. It crumbled around them, scattering across the floor and the miles and miles between them. Except they had rebuilt themselves, reframed the picture of their relationship, and now all the pieces had been found. One would think with all the broken pieces things could never be the same, and they weren’t.

They weren't because this time they fit better, the pieces were built stronger than before.

George’s hand splayed on top of Clay’s beating heart as he looked up at him. It was a strong beat, fast and rhythmic.

“Since the phone is off, want to go back to kissing?” George asked, Clay leaning into his space.

He hummed, so close George could nearly feel his lips on him. “Well, actually....” He leaned away a teasing smile on his face.

"You're kidding me." George said exasperated, minutes ago Clay had been begging to kiss him and ignore the call, and now?

"Well, now that I think about it. I have bad morning breath." Clay said with a frown on his lips, though his eyes were filled with mirth.

George, leaned into Clay's space who had begun to pull away. "Didn't stop you before."

Clay pressed a hand to his chest, frown breaking to reveal a smile. "You can wait for me to brush my teeth."

George groaned, twisting out of the other's grasp and muffling himself with a pillow.

"Oh come on Georgie, just a little wait."

"I don't want to wait anymore!" George protested, hand twisting in Clay's shirt and bringing him forward.

"You already waited so long, George. This is nothing." Clay said softly.

"Well too bad." George said yanking Clay down further. "You're all out of time."

## Chapter End Notes

Ngl, I hate this chapter. So I didn't really finish editing because the whole time I was cringing.

Anyway, that's the end of the fic, hope you enjoyed!

On a more meaningful note, this fic was written through an incredibly rough time. I would say I am in one of the lowest points of my life. I crashed into this fandom, fixating on it. And in somewhat of an adhd craze I began to write this. I have never been so grateful that I did... I am so grateful for everyone I met from this and all the support. I'm not the biggest fan of being sappy but I have no idea where I would be had I not done this. So even if I don't really like this work anymore, it's something near and dear to me.

So thank you all, if you enjoyed I have some other fics posted. But I do have two other dnf fics in the works, so if you like my writing subscribe, it's free :D Also drop some comments, and if you wanna be friends hmu!!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!